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Terry Teachout on *Atlas Shrugged* at 50

NATIONAL REVIEW

The Coming Cataclysm

WHY THE GOP FACES ONE AND HOW TO AVOID IT

RAMESH PONNURU & RICHARD LOWRY



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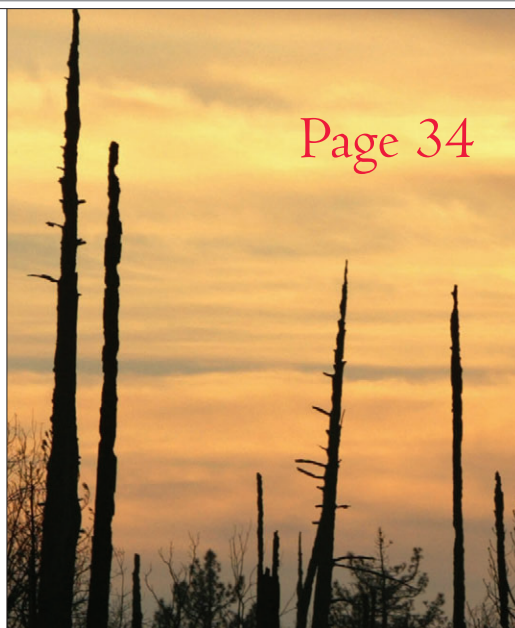
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■ COVER STORY

The Grim Truth

Republicans shouldn't lurch into a paralyzing hopelessness about 2008: They retain the power to change the national political environment in their favor. But neither should they content themselves with false reassurances that the environment is better than it looks. The plain truth is that the party faces a cataclysm, a rout that would give Democrats control of the White House and enhanced majorities in the House and the Senate. *By Ramesh Ponnuru & Richard Lowry*

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Ramesh Ponnuru / David Pryce-Jones
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Jack Fowler

letters to the editor

IN THE TRENCHES

You would never know from John Derbyshire's "Left Behind" column (November 5) that my campaign to bring back "spinster" is a narrow one concerned solely with usage. No sooner does he mention my name than he gets so exercised about World War I that you would think I had shot the Archduke. He gives us the Great War, the First World War, 1914, the Western Front, 1917, and Vera Brittain. It's a veritable guided tour through Flanders Fields with no poppy left behind, until at last, when the Great War is over, he crams us onto trains packed with lesbians all reading *The Well of Loneliness*.

Cue my theme song, Derb: "The Rose of No-Man's Land."

(Miss) Florence King
Fredericksburg, Va.

JOHN DERBYSHIRE RESPONDS: Blimey, it 'appened just like the old sweats said it would. The barrage lifts, the editor blows 'is whistle, we scrambles up out of the trench an' starts walkin' . . . an' didn't get ten yards before the enemy machine guns started up. Now I'm lyin' in this bloomin' shell 'ole minus an arm an' a leg, waitin' to meet me Maker. Tell the missus I did me duty, an' to take up golf an' get 'erself a motorbike.

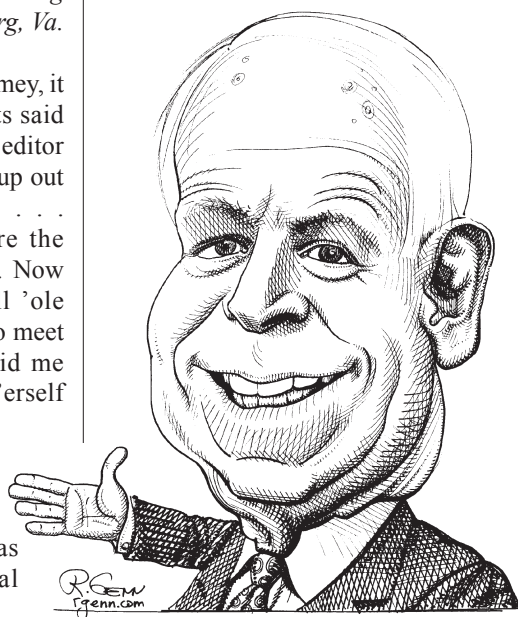
CAPTAIN PRESIDENT

I am greatly distressed by the indulgence NATIONAL REVIEW has shown Republican presidential candidates of late ("A Second Look at McCain" by Kate O'Beirne,

November 5). It has taken a heroic twisting of logic to produce some of the positive reviews that have appeared in your pages. Your lack of vision and leadership is stunning. NR has failed to support the clear alternative candidate that can return us to our conservative core—William Shatner.

Mr. Shatner has a strong background in law enforcement (*T.J. Hooker*), extensive diplomatic experience (*Star Trek*), and proven leadership skills (*Star Trek* again). With worldwide popularity, Mr. Shatner is also the ideal candidate to rebuild the image of America that has been tarnished by the party of Halliburton.

Raymond Gilbert
Lansdale, Pa.



ERRATUM

Your item in The Week concerning LT Michael Murphy (November 5) contained a common but regrettable error concerning military rank. Murphy was in the Navy, and his rank as a lieutenant should therefore be abbreviated LT, not Lt. The latter is used by the Marines and Air Force.

John W. Hughes
Kewanee, Ill.

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.



AN OUNCE OF INFORMATION IS WORTH POUNDS OF PREVENTION

When a local Blue Cross Blue Shield Company decided to do something about the obesity epidemic, they learned something interesting. Sometimes all it takes to make better health decisions is the right information. Nearly a third of overweight members thought their weight was just fine, and few understood the corresponding health risks associated with their weight.

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THE WEEK

■ From the front page of the *Washington Post*: “In His Wife’s Campaign, Bill Clinton Is a Free Agent.” Hasn’t he always been?

■ Mike Huckabee’s rising poll numbers make him the exciting new face in the presidential race, much as Fred Thompson was in the spring. But let’s get serious. Huckabee was an undistinguished governor; both Romney and Giuliani had more executive accomplishments. Huckabee has a better feel for the public’s concerns over health care and wage stagnation than other Republicans; but his distinctive solutions, such as protectionism, would be terrible public policy. Some conservatives fantasize that Huckabee would expand the Republican coalition. But as Patrick Buchanan demonstrated, the blue-collar protectionist voters that populism attracts do not make up for the free-market voters it repels. Huckabee isn’t even the complete social conservative he has been made out to be: He opposes school vouchers. Huckabee is a compelling orator. Would that he had more compelling things to say.

■ In a rare agreement to stop *really* ridiculous federal spending, the Senate voted to kill Hillary Clinton’s \$1 million earmark for a museum at the site of the 1969 Woodstock concert. The site is owned by a Clinton donor who is worth a very cool \$1.3 billion. Senate Republicans relished an attack on providing taxpayer support for a pet donor’s pet project, but veteran porkbuster John McCain is having the most fun at Hillary Clinton’s expense. The line that won him a standing ovation at the recent Fox News debate is now the poignant punchline in a campaign ad that highlights Clinton’s earmark for the museum. McCain explains, “Now, my friends, I wasn’t there. I’m sure it was a cultural and pharmaceutical event. [Wacky Woodstock attendees on screen.] I was tied up at the time. [Grainy shots of a young McCain in captivity.]” The ad concludes on a hopeful note: “No one can be president of the United States that supports projects such as these.”

■ Bob Jones III, chancellor of Bob Jones University, endorsed Mitt Romney for president. “I am completely opposed to the doctrines of Mormonism,” Jones said. (He has called Mormonism and Catholicism “cults which call themselves Christian.”) “But I’m not voting for a preacher. I’m voting for a president. It boils down to who can best represent conservative American beliefs.” Fundamentalists should vote for Mitt Romney if his convictions lead to policies they approve of, just as pro-abortion liberals rightly supported Mario Cuomo and John Kerry even though they belonged to a pro-life church, since they flouted its teachings. (That raised

See page 12



questions of consistency and honesty, which are another matter.) The public square is lined with houses of worship, but only zealots try to fuse the public square with their particular temple. Liberal anti-Mormon Romney-bashers could learn from BJU. Maybe an extension course?

■ Sen. Sam Brownback bowed out of the GOP presidential race. It was time: Having peaked at 3 percent in one poll in June, he had sagged down to 1 percent, and there was only \$94,000 in the kitty. We have long admired the senator, while considering his entry into the race quixotic. Now he can get back to full-time work in the Senate, where he is an important voice for the weak and defenseless.

■ In a bleak Republican season, Louisiana voters elected Republican congressman Bobby Jindal as their next governor. On October 20, in a “jungle primary” featuring a dozen candidates, they gave him 54 percent of their support—enough to avoid a runoff in November. Louisiana began trending Republican in 2004, with David Vitter’s Senate victory. Then came the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina, which battered the state’s Democrats so badly that incumbent governor Kathleen Blanco, who narrowly defeated Jindal in 2003, chose not to seek reelection. Many observers have called attention to Jindal’s age and ethnicity: He’s the 36-year-old son of immigrants from India. If he lives up to his



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THE WEEK...

promise, four years from now he won't be seen merely as a curiosity but rather as a conservative reformer with a substantive record of accomplishment—and a lot of people outside Louisiana will begin to take an interest in Jindal, too.

■ Hurricane Katrina and the California wildfires are disasters of vastly different scale. The fires destroyed 2,000 homes; Katrina destroyed 300,000. Even in the midst of the fires, San Diego had power and telephone service and passable roads; after Katrina, New Orleans had none of the above. So comparisons between the two are somewhat unfair. That said, the preparation of California officials was clearly on display in the efficient evacuation (a reverse 9-1-1 system warned people when to flee) and emergency response. Katrina would have been a mess regardless, but New Orleans would have benefited from state and local officials who had done more to plan for the worst and then done less

wiggling out when it came. Say of him what you will, but Arnold Schwarzenegger is no Kathleen Blanco.

■ Judge Michael Mukasey's waltz to confirmation as attorney general has ground to a halt. The issue is waterboarding, the controversial interrogation technique that subjects detainees to simulated drowning. Democrats are threatening to withhold their support unless Mukasey denounces it as torture. Mukasey quite reasonably objects that he does not yet have access to the classified information he would need in order to know how waterboarding fits (or once fit, since it apparently isn't currently used) into the administration's interrogation program. He doesn't want to make an off-the-cuff judgment that might expose CIA interrogators who did their job in good faith to legal jeopardy. Waterboarding is certainly close to the line of torture (which, under U.S. law, is defined as an act "specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering"). But it has long been used against our own military in interrogation-resistance training: If it is torture, we are guilty of war crimes against ourselves. A better case can be made that it constitutes "cruel, inhuman,

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

SEVERAL Democratic candidates in the current presidential-election season and the last one have informed voters that the world's problems can be solved if only we would repeal the Bush tax cuts. Ever mindful of the median voter, some, like Hillary Clinton, have been careful to add that only the tax cuts for the rich should be reversed.

The candidates have likely adopted this strategy, rather than one that calls for larger tax hikes, because voters remember the 1990s as generally prosperous times. How much damage could it really do to bring rates back to where they were when Bill Clinton was in the White House?

This approach, however, is extremely deceptive. One simply cannot raise enough revenue to fulfill all of the Democrats' spending fantasies just by reversing the Bush tax cuts on the rich.

This became vividly apparent in late October, when House Ways and Means Committee chairman Charles Rangel released his tax plan. The main thrust of Rangel's plan is a repeal of the dreaded Alternative Minimum Tax. Wary of losing all of the revenue that the AMT is forecasted to raise over the next decade, Rangel increases tax rates on the rich to offset the AMT's elimination.

Since Rangel's tax hikes are focused on the rich, and the AMT is scheduled to draw ever more revenue from the middle class in federal budget estimates, the rate increases necessary to maintain current revenue levels are enormous. Rangel adds a 4.6 percent "surtax" on adjusted gross incomes above \$500,000 in the first year of the law. This gives voters the impression that we are simply lifting the current top rate of 35 percent to the good old Clinton rate of 39.6 percent. But in 2011, when the Bush tax cuts expire, the surtax

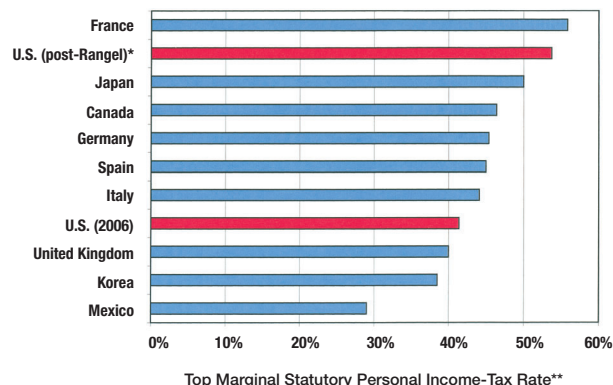
sticks, lifting the federal rate to 44.2 percent. Rangel also grabs revenue from the rich by phasing out exemptions and deductions. Add in the Medicare tax, and average state and local taxes, and the combined marginal income tax rate goes to 52 percent. As the accompanying chart illustrates, that would make our top marginal rate the second highest among the ten largest OECD economies, right below France.

This tax "reform" is revenue-neutral, which means that there is no money left over to fund, say, the universal health-care coverage so many of the Democratic candidates favor. If we lift the top rates to fund that too, then our rate would be far higher than that of any other major country, and begin to approach the 70 percent top rate of the 1970s.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT

Top Marginal Income-Tax Rates in the Ten Largest OECD Economies

(Ranked by 2006 GDP in Current U.S. Dollars)



SOURCES: OECD, WDI

*BASED ON AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS

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THE WEEK...

or degrading” treatment, also forbidden by U.S. law. Even here, though, there are ambiguities in the law that make it a complicated question. Congress could clarify by simply declaring waterboarding torture and leaving it at that—something it has declined to do, since its members probably fear the potential political vulnerability, in the event of another attack on U.S. soil, of having banned an effective interrogation technique. We think the use of waterboarding should be limited to high-value captives with knowledge of ongoing plots, such as Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who reportedly broke within minutes of being subjected to the technique. Reasonable people can disagree about this, but browbeating Mukasey is no substitute for responsible debate.

■ “Truthers”—those who believe that the World Trade Towers were brought down, not by airliners hijacked by terrorists, but by explosives planted by the U.S. government—are one of the opportunistic infections of free expression. They feed off hysteria and despair, and narcissism. (If we terrorized ourselves, then our most serious problem is a cabal of evil Americans.) A handful of truthers heckled Bill Clinton at a speech in Minneapolis recently, and he shut them down. “An inside job?” he asked, scornfully. “How dare you. How dare you. It was not an inside job. You guys have got to be careful, you’re going to give Minnesota a bad reputation.” Not Cicero on Catiline, maybe, but truthers deserve no more than a spanking. Thank you, Mr. President, for administering one.

■ Two makes a trend? Rep. Tom Lantos (D., Calif.) told a group of visiting Dutch politicians, who had suggested that the prison for terrorists in Guantánamo be shut down, that Europe had not been “as outraged by Auschwitz.” The 79-year-old Lantos speaks with some authority, as a survivor of a labor camp in pro-Nazi Hungary. Every adult, including Lantos, knows that diplomacy is not conducted by an endless scoring of points. But it is worthwhile, from time to time, to run the moral GPS. How odd that it should seem odd when a stalwart of the Democratic party, one of America’s (and the West’s) oldest political institutions, does the needful.

■ The media have portrayed a hung jury in a major terrorism trial as a defeat for the Bush Justice Department’s counterterrorism efforts. But it is not obviously that. The defendants were five operatives of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development: allegedly a financial supporter of Hamas, and a designated terrorist entity since 2001. The Justice Department indeed appears to have made mistakes. The exceptionally complex indictment, involving 197 charges when conviction on only a few would have put the defendants away for life, needlessly complicated the jury’s task. As though to balance this error with its opposite, the prosecution went too far in streamlining its presentation, letting the case stand or fall on a mysterious Israeli intelligence agent who was permitted to testify under a pseudonym. The defense managed to put his credibility—and the

Israeli–Palestinian conflict itself—on trial, and its strategy worked, at least for now. But the defendants will likely be retried, and this may be nothing more than a case of justice deferred.



■ Sen. Dick Durbin’s dream has thankfully died. He needed 60 votes for the Senate to take up his DREAM Act, and got only 52. The legislation offered citizenship to illegal immigrants who entered the country before age 16 and attended college or served in the military. Naturally, enforcement at the border and the workplace would not have been a prerequisite for

this amnesty. Only a dozen Senate Republicans supported the plan, and eight Democrats joined the opposition. The DREAM Act had previously enjoyed broad support, but Senator Durbin explains, “This issue has been so painful for so many people—they’re running scared.” He says that when Congress debates immigration reform, “the switchboards light up and the hate starts spewing.” A fairly worded Rasmussen poll found that only 22 percent of the public supports Durbin’s DREAM Act. That’s a whole lot of “hate.”

■ Just when we thought federal agricultural policy couldn’t get any worse, the Senate Ag Committee passed a farm bill that preserves old bad policies and creates a few new ones. The Senate bill extends for five more years the massive subsidies (around \$20 billion a year) that farmers receive, often whether they grow anything or not. Chief among the new bad ideas is a five-year, \$5.1 billion “permanent disaster relief trust fund,” sponsored by senators from a few drought-plagued states whose farmers have received billions in ad hoc disaster payments year after year. These senators want to create a permanent fund so that fiscal conservatives cannot torpedo the ad hoc bailouts, as they have occasionally done when the budget is tight. If Congress stopped subsidizing failure, farmers would have an incentive to decamp for greener pastures. The Senate bill would spend billions to keep them farming the same dry patches forever.

■ Close readers of the inside pages of the nation’s newspapers will know that violence in Iraq has fallen 70 percent since June, according to the country’s interior ministry, and when American combat deaths in October are counted they will probably be at their lowest level in two years. The surge continues to make security gains. The question remains whether the Iraqi government will attempt to cement these gains with serious outreach to the Sunnis, including integrating Sunni security volunteers (aka former insurgents) into official police forces. For now, conditions on the ground are changing for the better—not that you’ll be reading about it on the front pages.

■ President Bush slapped new unilateral sanctions on Iran. His administration will designate the Iranian Revolutionary

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THE WEEK...

Guard Corps (IRGC) a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction on the basis of its ballistic-missile program. It will also designate the Quds Force—the IRGC’s elite foreign-operations division—a terrorist organization. These designations trigger sanctions against the economic infrastructure of the IRGC, which is thought to control up to 40 percent of the Iranian economy. Several Iranian companies and three state-controlled banks are specifically targeted; any of their assets under U.S. jurisdiction will be subject to confiscation. Since U.S.-Iranian commercial ties are all but nonexistent, these measures will accomplish little. More promising is the possibility that European and other foreign companies that deal with the designated Iranian entities will cease doing so, for fear that they too will come under U.S. sanction. But even this hope is likely to be disappointed in large measure: The IRGC will set up new front companies, and these will evade detection for a season. Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council will twiddle its thumbs. We hope the president is devising ways to ratchet up the pressure still further.

■ Pakistan has both nuclear weapons and a Talibanist minority: not a happy combination. But in Pakistan the U.S. has had six years of good luck. After September 11, general-president Pervez Musharraf cast his lot with us and against the terrorists. The restive population demands greater liberty even as the Islamists sow mayhem in tribal areas, and on occasion in big cities (cf. the July Red Mosque bombing)—yet somehow the lid stays on. Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who recently returned to Pakistan to work out a power-sharing deal with Musharraf, narrowly survived a bomb blast meant to kill her. Bhutto’s years in power were marked by spectacular corruption, and Musharraf is a variation on that old theme “our S.O.B.” But each recognizes the dangers of radical Islam; each is Western-oriented and (comparatively) progressive; and together they control the military and the most important political party. No two persons stand better odds of pulling Pakistan away from the abyss, and if our luck holds a little longer they may achieve just that.

■ “In Cuba it is illegal to change jobs, to change houses, to travel abroad, and to read books or magazines without the express approval of the state. It is against the law for more than three Cubans to meet without permission. . . . Clinics for ordinary Cubans suffer from chronic shortages in medicine and equipment. Many Cubans are forced to turn to the black market to feed their families. . . . [Cuba’s rulers have] jailed and beaten journalists, raided their homes, and seized their paper, ink, and fax machines.” All true, though you read it only in conservative outlets, or perhaps in local newspapers with large émigré readerships. But these words were spoken at the State Department, by President Bush, who introduced six relatives of imprisoned Cuban dissidents. Bush hopes to influence Cuban opinion for the day, not distant, when Castro dies, to be succeeded by his almost-equally-elderly brother

Raúl. He addressed the military and the police directly: “Will you defend a disgraced and dying order by using force against your own people?” That has been the rule for almost half a century. Bush laid down a marker. Will his successor honor it?

■ Not so long ago, a French ambassador declared that Israel is a “sh***y little country.” A hue and cry followed, but actually the man was only speaking in the open what his colleagues in the Quai d’Orsay have almost always and unanimously believed among themselves. French diplomats have issued innumerable policy papers and briefs to the effect that the creation of Israel was a mistake, and it must accede to whatever demands Arabs choose to make. The *Jerusalem Post*, Israel’s prestigious English-language daily, reports a visit in Paris of Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert with President Sarkozy. The two apparently had an “identical” position about the dangers of the Iranian nuclear bomb. Sarkozy said that Israel’s security is simply not up for discussion. And he is also quoted as saying, “Israel’s establishment is a miracle and may have been the central event of the 20th century.” *Quelle horreur!* The Quai d’Orsay will have to show fast and furious how effective it is at undermining a president so determined to take a groundbreaking line of his own.



■ A few months ago, Scott Thomas Beauchamp—a soldier serving in Iraq—wrote an article for *The New Republic* in which he claimed to have witnessed (and engaged in) several over-the-top instances of petty and cruel behavior as a consequence of the dehumanizing effects of war. The stories seemed farfetched; sure enough, an Army investigation found some of them to be “fabricated,” while others were “false” or “completely unfounded.” *TNR* admitted that at least one story was botched, yet its editors stood by Beauchamp and accused the Army of stonewalling. In mid-October Matt Drudge posted the transcript of a phone conversation in which *TNR* editor Franklin Foer and executive editor Peter Scoblic threatened, cajoled, and begged Beauchamp to resolve a “fairly disturbing” factual error. Beauchamp refused to comment. Foer now says that Beauchamp was “under considerable duress” during that conversation (his commanding officer was present). We agree. But the transcript made it seem desperate magazine editors were the ones applying the pressure.

■ In this age of Middle East turmoil, global warming, and \$90-a-barrel oil, opposition to nuclear power has something quaint and, well, Seventies about it. Which suits those whose thought processes stopped in the Carter administration. Here, for example, are rock-’n’-roll musicians Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, and Graham Nash, campaigning against federal loan guarantees for new nuclear power plants. “Thirty

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THE WEEK...

years ago, we felt that this monster was dead,” said Nash. “It’s trying to raise its ugly head.” Nash was recalling the triumphs of his youth, when he and his co-campaigners helped organize the 1979 “No Nukes” mega-concert at New York’s Madison Square Garden. Ah, Graham, but that was then, and this is, like, now. And by the way: Veterans of the rock-’n’-roll scene who are approaching retirement age should be careful with phrases like “raise its ugly head.”

■ Iatrogenic ailments are those caused by physicians (e.g., infections caught in hospitals). We are now suffering from a plague of iatrogenic nooses, thanks to intense media coverage of an alleged hate crime in Jena, La. There, nooses hung from a schoolyard tree were supposed to have been a threat to black students. Since then, nooses have popped up hither and yon, including four in New York City (where cops said there had been no complaints about nooses for five years previously). Halloween displays have been purged of hanged corpses, lest they appear to advocate lynching. America’s history of lynching is shameful. But this is copycat mischief (and, no doubt in some cases, copycat self-hatred, as when Tawana Brawley scrawled racist epithets on herself). Who benefits? A lazy press, always on the lookout for stories of white racism, however contrived. Who suffers? Everyone trying to live an ordinary decent life, free of poisonous racial drama.

■ Communist China has big ambitions in space, one of them being the assembly of a permanent orbiting space station by the year 2020. Now, according to the rules of the Chinese Communist party, the presence of three party members in one “work unit” is sufficient for the formation of a party branch. Since all Chinese astronauts are party members, we can look forward to the formation of a party branch in space once they have that space station up. The orbiting cadres will, says the Xinhua News Agency, “carry out the regular activities of a Communist Party of China branch in space in the way we do on Earth.” Regular activities, hmm? A “struggle” session, perhaps, where an astronaut found to have been concealing his landlord family background is yelled at and beaten continuously for several hours? Or self-criticism workshops, where each astronaut is sealed into a space capsule for a month or two with gruel and water until he has uncovered all his Incorrect Thoughts and committed them to paper? Or possibly some routine torture for the occasional astronaut discovered practicing Falun Gong meditation in the shuttle bay? Pulling out fingernails in zero gravity can’t be *that* difficult.

■ Roma is the proper designation of gypsies, and their language is known as Romanes. Their origins are uncertain, but they seem to have a special connection to Romania, where perhaps as many as a million of them live. Around the countryside there they still enjoy their immemorial way of life, with traveling caravans and campsites and many children. It’s a tribute to their determination to be themselves. Under

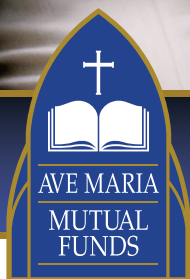
Nazi influence the wartime Romanian government deported more than 25,000 of them to extermination camps. Probably as many as half a million of the Roma of central Europe were murdered in the Holocaust, alongside the Jews. Nothing has been done by way of reparation, or even apology. On the contrary, the Roma still face all sorts of petty discrimination that serves the purpose of keeping them poor and excluded. President Traian Basescu is trying to put right what he can, and he has made a speech apologizing for the deportation to their death of the Roma. He even spoke in part in Romanes. There are no votes in it, which is all the more to his credit.

■ Cambodian dictator Pol Pot, whose Khmer Rouge revolutionaries killed around a quarter of their country’s population during the five years (1975–79) of their rule, died peacefully in his bed in 1998. His automobile was briefly placed for sale on eBay. Described as a “classic 1973 Mercedes Benz Stretch Limousine” with six seats and a 3.5-liter engine, the car was to be available for inspection at the Renakse Hotel in Phnom Penh. Mercedes of this type were used by the fanatically agrarian regime “to collect and ferry dignitaries and VIPs.” Buyers were warned, however, that the car would benefit from some work, as “there is a limit to the skills available in Cambodia.” Now why would that be?

■ Girls in the sixth through eighth grades at King Middle School in Portland, Maine, will now be administered the birth-control patch or pill upon request. Seven of nine Portland School Committee members voted for this policy. Parents will not be notified if their children have made a request. Though only five of the 134 students reported having had sexual intercourse, the measure’s advocates claim that it was passed in an effort to reduce teen pregnancy. Children will not be treated as children by adults who are not willing to act as adults.

■ James D. Watson shared a Nobel prize for describing the structure of DNA. He also, age 79, stepped on the third rail of racial difference, telling the *Sunday Times* of London that “all the testing says” the intelligence of Africans is “not really . . . the same as ours.” He tried to backtrack, writing in the *Independent* that he meant to say “we do not yet adequately understand” how “different environments in the world have selected . . . the genes which determine our capacity to do different things.” Too late; he was forced to resign from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Long Island, the research institution he served for 40 years. Will Cold Spring return the grants he brought in? It should be possible to discuss science dispassionately, or even to be reproved for discussing it bumptiously, as Watson did with the *Sunday Times*, without suffering the Queen of Hearts’ penalty.

■ Good news from the magazine world: John Podhoretz was named editor of *Commentary*. He will begin his duties in 2009. He will succeed Neal Kozodoy, who, in 1995, succeeded Norman Podhoretz, John’s father. This has provoked a certain amount of clucking about “nepotism”—which is ridiculous. John Podhoretz was chosen by the *Commentary* board, without the knowledge of Norman. And it should go



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THE WEEK...

without saying that sometimes sons follow in their fathers' footsteps—choose the same line of work. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were all sons of professional musicians. And Barry Bonds wanted to play baseball. John Podhoretz has been a distinguished writer and editor for some 25 years, demonstrating huge talent. *Commentary*, that critical journal, will be in good hands. Besides which, he is the son of a writer-editor mother, too: Midge Decter. The apple has not fallen very far from the parental tree, and thank heaven for that.

■ “Eighty Million Years Without Sex.” Yes, it got our attention, too. That headline on the BBC News website does not, however, refer to some hapless husband’s exceptionally long exile to the doghouse, but to the generative activities of a tiny freshwater invertebrate called the bdelloid rotifer. Genetic evidence tells us that these little critters gave up sexual reproduction back in the Mesozoic Era, 80 million years ago. Scientists have long been puzzled to understand how the species has kept itself going all this time. A team of scientists has now solved the mystery. A neat genetic trick lets the rotifers *fake* the business of having two copies of each gene, which is the main point of sexual reproduction. Says Dr. Alan Tunnacliffe of Cambridge University, the lead researcher on the project: “Evolution of gene function in this way can’t happen in sexual organisms, which means there could be some benefit to millions of years without sex after all.” Well, yes. For one thing, you get more sleep.

PUBLIC POLICY

Time for New Alternatives

THE Alternative Minimum Tax was born in 1969, in a fit of populist indignation over the use of tax breaks by rich people and corporations to wipe out their tax liabilities. Rather than prune the tax breaks, Congress created a parallel tax code to make sure no one paid too little. Many taxpayers thus have to compute their tax liability under both the regular and the alternative code, and pay whichever is the higher.

In the alternative code, tax brackets are not indexed for inflation or wage growth. Since more and more people are rich by the dollar standards of 1969, more people pay the tax. Bush’s tax cuts have lowered many people’s regular tax liability to the point where they, too, must pay the AMT. Unless Congress and the president act, 23 million people will pay the AMT this year.

Both parties have objections to the AMT. Because the AMT does not include a deduction for state and local taxes, it is hitting more and more residents of high-tax, which is usually to say blue, states. This feature of the AMT is one of its merits: A deduction for state and local taxes amounts to a subsidy by low-tax states to high-tax ones, and thus encourages states to keep

taxes higher than they should. But the increasing pain the AMT is inflicting on Blue America is the reason many Democrats want to reform or repeal the tax. Republicans, meanwhile, dislike, or ought to dislike, the way the AMT punishes large families and investment, its raising of marginal tax rates, and the deadweight loss to the economy of making people fill out two tax forms.

Until now, Washington has passed temporary “patches” that minimize the damage from the AMT each year. Now Charles Rangel, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is proposing to abolish the AMT for individuals. He is also proposing to cut corporate tax rates. That’s the good news.

The bad news is that he has chosen the most economically damaging way possible to compensate for these tax cuts. His plan assumes that most of Bush’s tax cuts will expire and that taxes on capital gains, dividends, estates, and high earners will therefore go up. Then Rangel adds on still more taxes. Couples making more than \$200,000 (or maybe more than \$150,000—the precise number has not been determined) would pay an additional 4 percent tax; couples making more than \$500,000 would pay 4.6 percent. The top marginal tax rate would thus go from 35 percent to 44.2 percent. It is an anti-growth plan that ought to be stopped.

Conservatives in the House, led by Rep. Paul Ryan, share Rangel’s interest in abolishing the AMT as part of a larger tax reform, but their reform looks very different. They would create a new, reformed tax system with lower rates and less complexity. Taxpayers would be able to choose between filing under their new system or under the old tax code, but the AMT would be eliminated. They do not want to find a way for the government to recoup the revenues it is forgoing by getting rid of the AMT, since they do not believe it was entitled to that money in the first place.

Congressman Ryan’s plan is admirably pro-growth, but we confess to some concerns about his version of reform. Federal policy shortchanges investments in children: Parents make the financial sacrifices to raise them, and then our entitlements ensure that everyone reaps financial benefits from their wages. The current tax code tries to make up for this problem by offering a \$1,000 tax credit per child. Under the conservatives’ plan, this paltry amount would shrink still further. The marginal tax benefit per child would be reduced to \$350. In this important respect, the plan goes in the wrong direction. We hope that Ryan and his colleagues revisit this question before proceeding further.

Given the tax-hiking predilections of this Congress, the best outcome over the next year would be another temporary patch, with no tax increases to balance it. If Congress tries to take up AMT reform, conservatives should insist that the AMT be made less hostile to savings and to children. In the longer run, they should follow Rangel’s lead and make the repeal of the AMT part of a larger reform of the entire tax code. But that larger reform should, unlike his, favor growth, and, unlike the current supply-side plan, help families too.

Republicans should follow Rangel’s lead and make the repeal of the AMT part of a larger reform of the entire tax code.

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Turks at the Border

LIFE is fraught along the Turkey–Iraq border. The Turks stand ready to launch a cross-border incursion to attack the bases of the PKK, a Marxist, Kurdish-nationalist group that is waging a terror war against them. Turkish public opinion and senior military officers, both angered by the deaths of Turkish soldiers, demand nothing less. But an incursion might overturn the stability and prosperity of the Kurdish regions of northern Iraq—and risk intensifying the instability of the rest of Iraq and the problems facing U.S. forces there. It is a can of scorpions.

The Turks also threaten to close down the U.S. airbase on their soil at Incirlik—a base that is vital to America’s campaign in Iraq. Does this demonstrate a rising anti-American strain in Turkish opinion? Undeniably. The U.S. intervention in Iraq complicated Turkey’s Kurdish problem by creating a semi-independent Kurdish region from which anti-Turkish attacks are now launched. We have failed to get the Iraqi-Kurdish authorities to take action against the PKK or to restrain those attacks.

America’s interests in all this are fairly plain. First, we need to keep Turkey as an ally. It is almost the sole stable element in an unstable but strategically vital area. A U.S. airbase in Kurdish Iraq, however useful, would be no compensation for the loss of Turkey. Second, we need to maintain the Kurdish regions as stable, prosperous, and pro-American areas in an otherwise turbulent Iraq. Third, in order to achieve both aims (and larger strategic purposes), we need to keep the Incirlik base open for the U.S.

It is all but undeniable that Ankara has good moral and even legal justification for intervention in northern Iraq.

What these interests suggest is that the U.S. should support a limited Turkish incursion into the remote mountainous regions of northern Iraq to attack the PKK bases and, if possible, to capture or kill PKK leaders. This holds some risks for the stability of Iraq—there are always risks in military action—but it is perhaps the least bad option for Washington. It is all but undeniable that Ankara has good moral and even legal justification for intervention. The PKK bases are situated away from major population areas, so intervention need not lead inexorably to wider conflict. If handled sensibly, a limited intervention might even advance regional stability.

Ideally, U.S. and Iraqi forces would join the Turkish army in a combined operation. At the very least, the U.S. should lean strongly on the Iraqi authorities not to protest seriously any Turkish action and to expel as many PKK leaders as possible. In return the U.S. should seek strong public assurances—from Turkey’s generals as well as its politicians—that Ankara has no objection to the existence of a semi-autonomous Kurdish entity provided it is part of a united Iraq and provided too that it refuses to allow its territory to be used as a terrorist haven. Washington now seems to be moving toward some such approach. This must be the start of

a wholly new Turkey policy: one that accommodates Turkish interests while frankly contesting anti-Americanism in Turkish opinion.

PUBLIC POLICY II

Hawaiian Nativism

THE House of Representatives has voted 261–153 to recognize ethnic Hawaiians as a new Indian tribe. Astonishingly, 39 House Republicans supported this shameful piece of legislation—a bill that will thwart some Americans’ rights in the interest of further dividing our nation along racial lines.

The measure fell short of the 290 votes needed to override the veto that President Bush has promised. But the bill’s anticipated success in both chambers of Congress—and the support given it by many ostensibly conservative Republicans in both—is cause for alarm.

The bill, sponsored by Hawaii senator Daniel Akaka (D.), would first create a nine-member panel to decide who counts as a “native” Hawaiian and enroll members of the “tribe.” It would then create a tribal governing entity, which would negotiate for land with the federal and state governments. This entity, a second government for aboriginal Hawaiians, could establish schools that discriminate against non-“native” children and hold elections with racial criteria for participation, immune to challenges under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Indeed, the bill was written to circumvent a 2000 Supreme Court decision that forbade the state’s Office of Hawaiian Affairs to hold an election in which only “native” Hawaiians could participate.

Proponents of the bill argue that Hawaiians are merely seeking the recognition already given to the sovereign Indian tribes. But there are important historical differences. Whereas Indian tribes saw their land seized by the federal government, Hawaiians exercised self-government on June 27, 1959, when they voted overwhelmingly to become our nation’s 50th state. Unlike Indian tribes, aboriginal Hawaiians were not geographically segregated by federal troops, but live interspersed among Hawaiians of all races and even in other states.

The federal government has no business recognizing racial groups as distinct nations simply because they are ethnically unique. It sets a terrible and divisive precedent, which, if pushed to its logical conclusion, would turn John Edwards’s fantasy of “two Americas” into a reality of five or six Americas, as other ethnic groups followed the Hawaiian example.

The Bush administration’s opposition will thwart this legislation for now and simultaneously deny cover to the Republicans who are supporting it. They include not only Alaska’s congressional delegation, which traditionally supports any old idea of the Hawaii delegation, but also Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma and Sens. Norm Coleman of Minnesota and Gordon Smith of Oregon.

Unfortunately, however, this attempt to divide Americans by race will not end with a Bush veto. Hillary Clinton voted for it in 2006—and she may sign it into law yet, if Americans make her their president.

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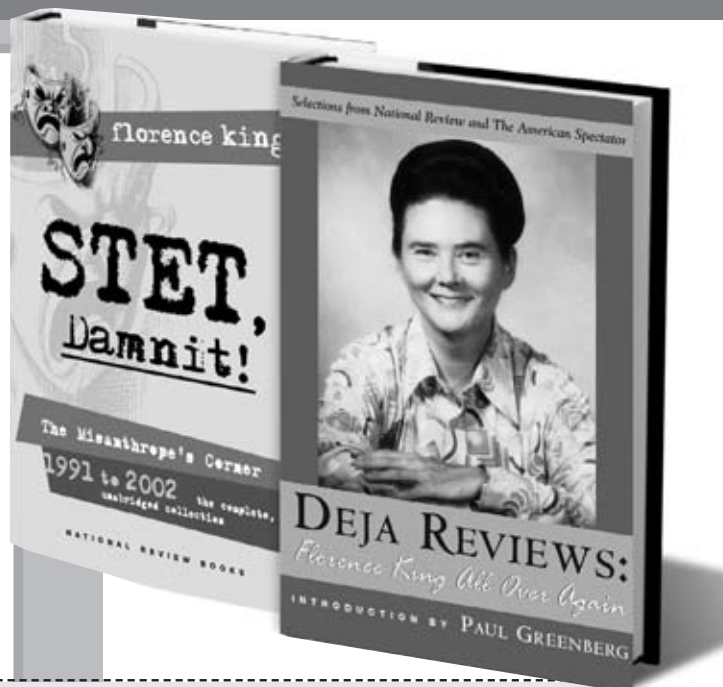
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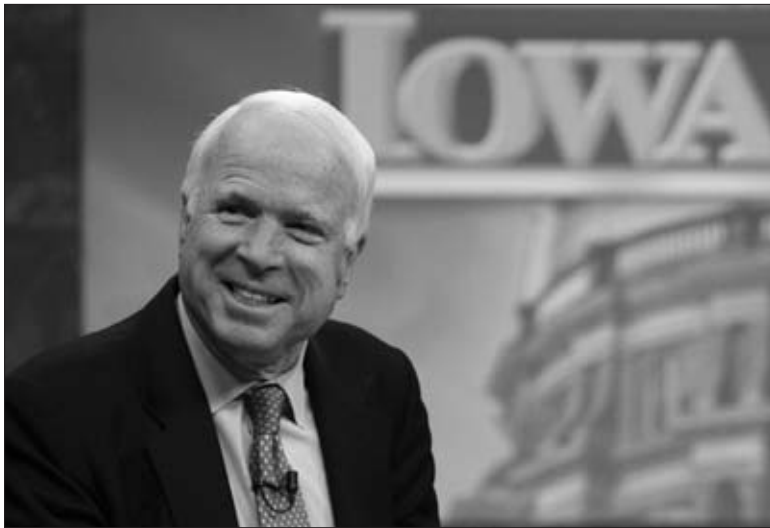
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The veteran candidate, giving it one last try

BYRON YORK

OCTOBER 26 marked the 40th anniversary of the day John McCain was shot down over North Vietnam. How do you commemorate an occasion like that? Another politician might have made a big deal of it—Bill and Hillary Clinton have held gala celebrations for less—but McCain does things a bit differently. As this day begins, he is walking into a small room in a slightly tattered Clarion Hotel here in Sioux City, playing second fiddle to a fellow POW and local legend, Col. George E. “Bud” Day. The two men stand under a big blue banner that reads, “Siouxland Salutes Colonel Bud Day and John McCain,” and McCain spends most of his time talking not about himself, but about Day.

“Bud Day was the most steadfast, the most inspirational, and the toughest of anybody,” McCain says of his former cellmate. Day returns the compliment, calling McCain “one of the most courageous people that you will ever meet.” The two men are looking forward to a day of traveling together to small, town hall–style meetings around northwest Iowa. It’s nothing grand;

lately, some of McCain’s critics have accused him of trying to exploit his war-hero past, but as exploitation goes, this is pretty small stuff.

Still, McCain is campaigning as hard as he knows how. A few months ago, he was given up for dead after two tremendously damaging and self-inflicted blows to his campaign: his unpopular stand on immigration and a financial crisis that left him almost broke. But now he’s back, and people are willing to give him another chance.

Of course, the Iowa polls say he’s at least 20 points behind leader Mitt Romney. And Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, and Fred Thompson are all ahead of him, too. But Iowa, McCain’s aides say over and over again, has a tendency to break late. Who knows what could happen? So McCain is soldiering on, if that term can be used for the world’s most famous naval aviator. At 71 years old, he’s running on unfulfilled ambition, on sheer determination, and on his still-considerable energy. The question now is whether he can overcome his own mistakes.

After McCain’s appearance with Day, everyone heads to the lobby to wait for the bus—the 2007 version of the old Straight

Talk Express—to take McCain to meet voters at the Pizza Ranch restaurant in Sheldon, Iowa, about an hour away. But several minutes pass and no bus appears. There’s some sort of problem, and word comes that the bus won’t start. Instantly, the McCain camp starts worrying—not big worrying, but nervous-joke worrying—about the news getting out: “Sputtering bus latest woe of sputtering campaign.” An aide checks the Drudge Report throughout the day and is pleased when nothing shows up.

Meanwhile, a young staffer appears in a rented minivan, and McCain, Day, a couple of aides, and I climb in for the ride to Sheldon. On the way, I ask McCain about the near-meltdown over the summer. Can a man who didn’t know his campaign was nearly broke have the credibility to keep the federal budget under control? “We made budgetary assumptions that were totally false,” McCain tells me. “I knew we had problems, and it’s my responsibility. But the key is, do you fix it when you see problems? And we fixed it.”

McCain downplays the financial damage, but he doesn’t try to conceal the hit he took over his stand in favor of “comprehensive” immigration reform, which many voters thought was a short route to amnesty. That hurt far more than any money woes. “I can show you polling numbers that it really didn’t have anything to do with the financial situation,” McCain tells me. “As the immigration issue became hotter and hotter among Republicans, I started down.”

Now, he tells voters every day that he’s gotten the message: Border enforcement must come first. I ask him whether, since he ultimately ended up in an enforcement-first position, he regretted not taking that stance in the first place. “Well, yeah, but you see, what I underestimated was the lack of trust and confidence in government,” McCain says. “I mean, I said time after time, ‘We’ll enforce the borders. We’ll enforce the borders. Here’s X billion dollars to do it. We’ll enforce the borders.’ They just didn’t believe us.”

Mark my words, McCain tells me—at the next meeting with voters, somebody will bring up border enforcement. And sure enough, a few minutes later at the Pizza Ranch, a retired schoolteacher named Frew Brown asks about immigration. “We learned a lesson from the last debate,” McCain tells Brown. “The lesson is, people want the border secure. They want the

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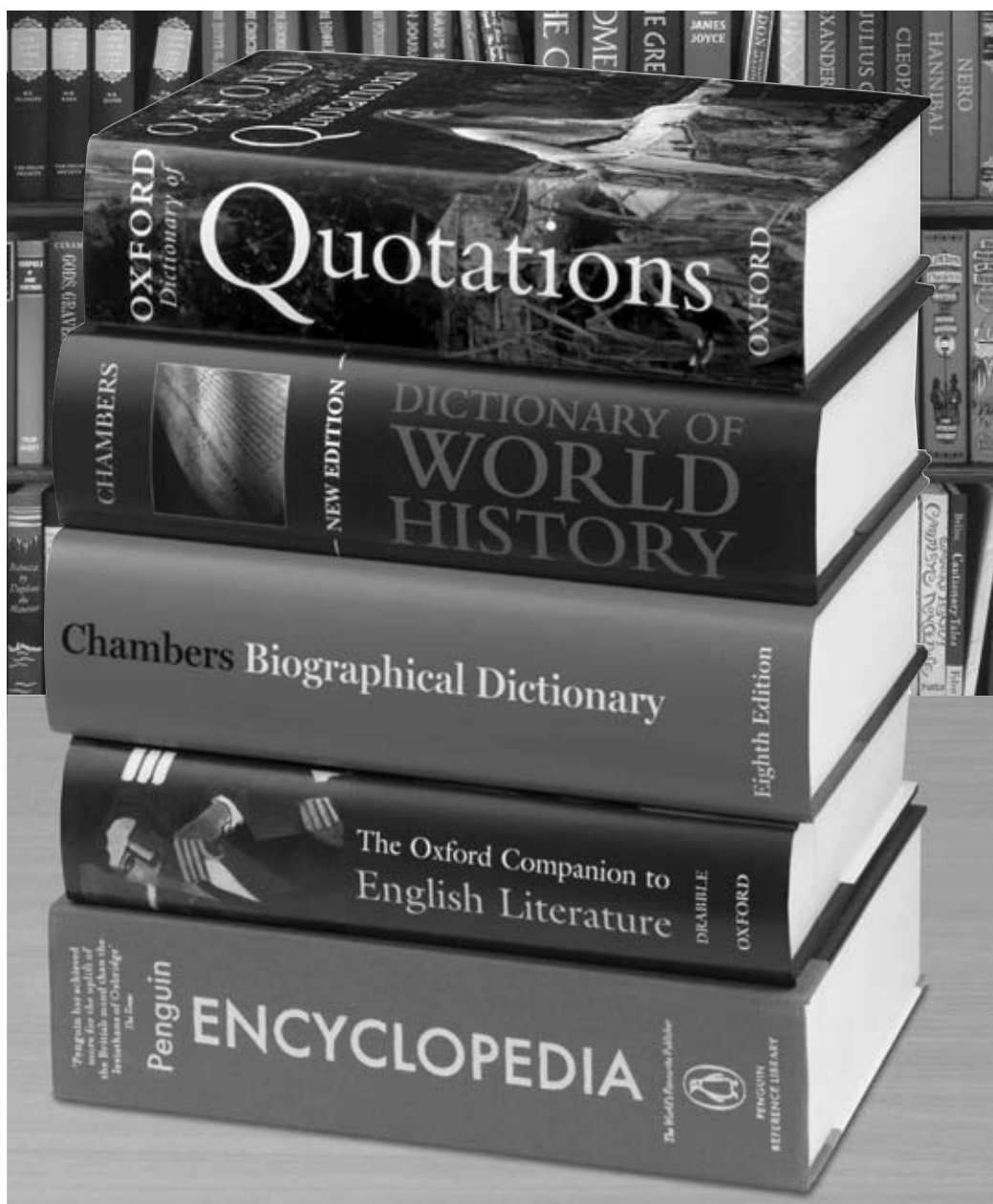
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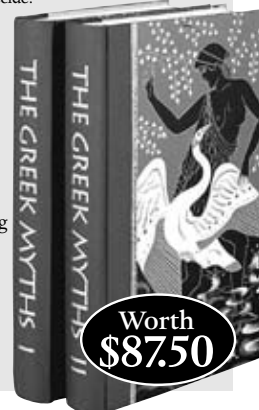
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border secure.” McCain becomes emphatic, almost shooting his words at Brown: “I got the message. The border has to be secure. And we have to do what’s necessary to secure our border, and then we can move on to other aspects of the problem.”

In the van, I bring up Romney’s statement, made the day before, that as president he might order a “bombardment of some kind” against Iran. The word “bombardment” strikes the McCain group as somewhat quaint, and top aide Mark Salter, sitting in the back seat, says Romney must have just read a book about Francis Scott Key and the assault on Fort McHenry. With that, McCain breaks into open ridicule of Romney, bellowing out mock commands:

“Bring up the mortars!”

“Don’t tear that tattered ensign down!”

“All those forward, go aft!”

Everybody is laughing. Colonel Day suggests that candidates like Romney don’t know which end is up when it comes to military matters. He gets no argument from McCain.

Still, I ask if voters aren’t a little rattled by all the talk about possible U.S. attacks on Iran, and by President Bush’s warning that Iranian actions risk bringing about “World War III.” Are they looking for a little more restraint in a candidate? “Maybe ‘restraint’ isn’t the word, but maybe someone who appears thoughtful and has exhausted all other options before pulling the trigger,” McCain answers. “But I want to look you in the eye and tell you, they are a threat. They are a threat. They are a threat in the region and they are a threat to our stability. The president is right.”

On Iraq, everyone knows McCain has bet his campaign on the success of the surge, but what comes through on this day is his frustration with the war’s first four years. He thinks a lot about the losses from that time. “The thing that makes you almost cry is that one of the battles that will rank among the most courageous battles the Marines have ever fought is the battle of Fallujah,” he tells me. “They lost 86 guys and several hundred wounded in the most

bitter kind of house-to-house fighting. And you know what happened then? They left. They left. After sacrificing 86 of those brave young 19- and 20-year-olds, they left. It’s unconscionable.”

On his right wrist, McCain wears a black bracelet bearing the name of Matthew J. Stanley, a 22-year-old Army specialist killed December 16, 2006, by an IED in Taji, Iraq. Stanley was from Wolfboro, N.H., and his mother gave McCain the bracelet at a town meeting. He says it helps

him keep the war in perspective—as if he needed more perspective, since his son, Jimmy, is a Marine serving in Iraq. McCain doesn’t bring that up in public, but he mentions it to me as he looks at Matthew Stanley’s picture on the bracelet. “We never talk about my son being there, and I don’t let that affect my views on the war,” he says quietly.

McCain can be a decidedly unsentimental man—he once told me that the anti-war congressman John Murtha had been too affected by talking to families of soldiers killed in Iraq—but just seconds after he mentions Jimmy, he shows a far different side. He tells me a story he heard from Theodore Roosevelt biographer Edmund Morris, who described how Roosevelt’s favorite son, Quentin, a mili-

tary pilot, was shot down and killed on the western front in World War I. A woman sent Roosevelt a message of condolence, and he wrote back a strongly worded letter saying he would gladly sacrifice all his sons in the cause of freedom. “It was a very brave, strong letter in the TR style,” McCain tells me. “And then, a couple of weeks later, somebody walked into the stable at Sagamore Hill, and there was TR with his arms around Quentin’s favorite pony, with tears streaming down his face, saying, ‘Quenty, Quenty.’”

McCain pauses for just a moment. “It was one of the more touching stories I’ve ever—” Another pause. “I get a little emotional just relating it.”

The day before McCain’s trip to Sheldon, he appears at a well-attended town meeting at Dordt College, a small Christian school a

few miles away. McCain seems to make a good impression on the students, but perhaps just as important is the impression he makes after he finishes speaking.

When he says his goodbyes, McCain ducks into a small room for a meeting with a local social-conservative activist named Ralph Goemaat. Goemaat isn’t a high roller; he works in the college’s audio-visual department and moonlights at the local radio station. But he’s truly committed and influential among pro-lifers in this part of Iowa, and his support is much coveted. At this point, he’s narrowed his choice down to McCain or Mike Huckabee.

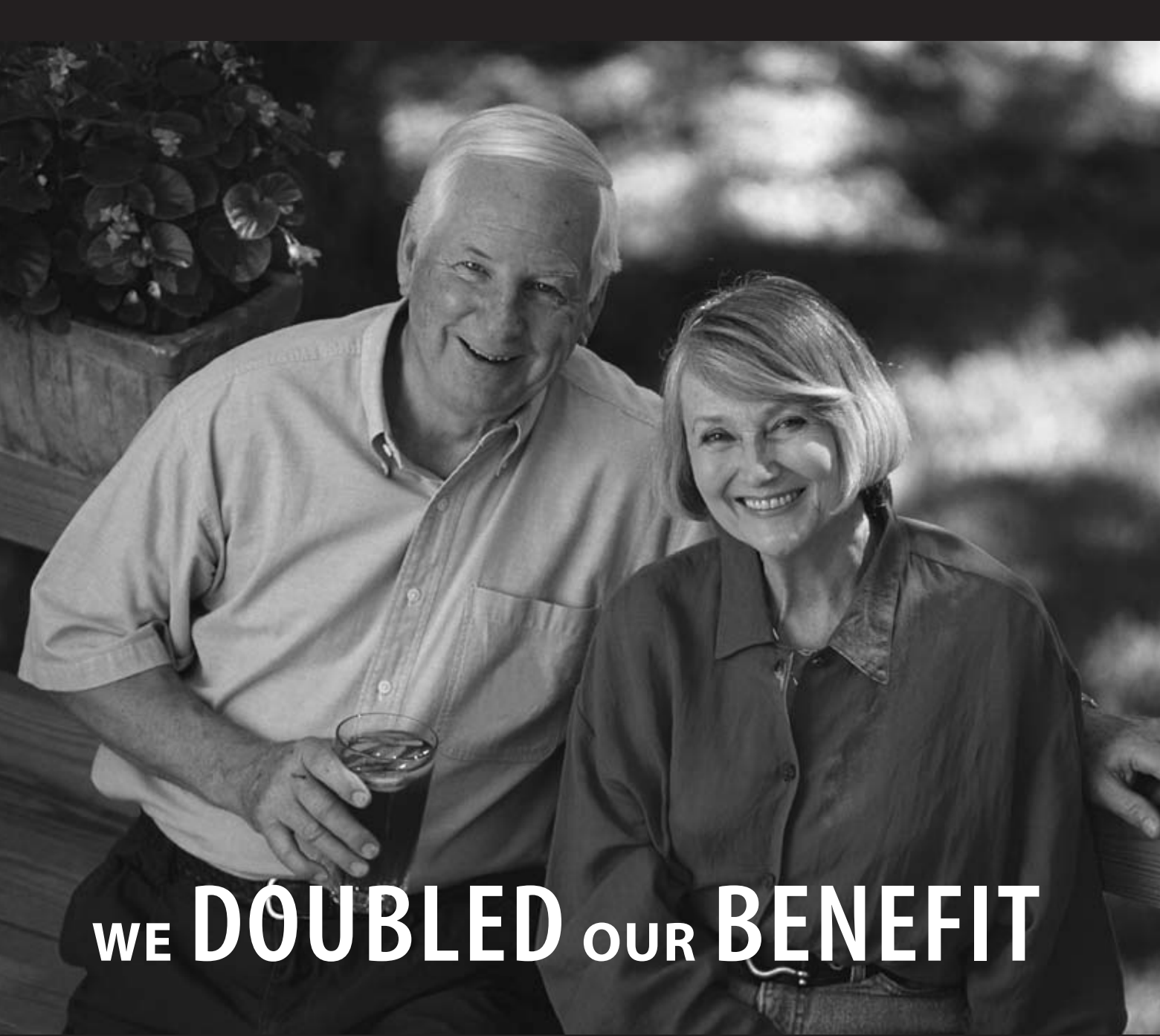
The door closes and McCain and Goemaat, joined by Marlys Popma, a well-known Iowa social-conservative activist who supports McCain, begin to talk. “In the room with just the three of us there, I felt that he was really open with me and pouring out his heart,” Goemaat tells me later. “I liked what I saw.” They don’t agree on everything—Goemaat remains concerned about McCain’s views on stem cells—but McCain seems to have won Goemaat’s trust. “He will not tell you what he thinks you want to hear,” Goemaat says. “I appreciate that. I don’t want somebody just telling me what they think I want to hear. I want to know where I disagree with them, and see if I can live with that.” McCain leaves encouraged.

There are other things to be encouraged about. When people give McCain a new look, many of them, like Ralph Goemaat, like what they see. McCain still faces lots of obstacles; besides the polls and immigration and his campaign’s finances and the fact that he has driven some conservatives crazy over the years, there are still other problems, such as concerns that he’s just too old for the job. But there’s enough encouraging response to keep McCain on the trail. And there’s something gallant about the way he goes on, at his age and in reduced circumstances, in the face of the long odds and the wrenching thought that he has himself, at least in part, to blame.

In the 2000 campaign, McCain was famously superstitious—at any given time he might carry anything from a lucky penny to a lucky compass to a lucky feather. It got him through a lot. In the minivan leaving Sioux City, I ask if he’s carrying any lucky charms. He usually does, he tells me—but at the moment he just doesn’t have one.

NR

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Rudy Presses Suit

The candidate, as mayor, was a perpetual plaintiff

KATE O'BEIRNE

CANDIDATE RUDY GIULIANI pledges to appoint strict-constructionist judges who won't make policy from the bench, because "making laws is the responsibility of an elected legislature." He cites Justices Scalia, Thomas, Roberts, and Alito as model appointments. *Plaintiff* Giuliani had a wholly different view of the judge's role. As mayor of New York City, he launched lawsuits that sought liberal rulings to punish gun manufacturers and to overturn legislation on immigration, welfare reform, and taxes. When elected legislatures made laws with which he disagreed, this Giuliani thought it was a judge's responsibility to legislate from the bench.

In late September, Rudy Giuliani appeared at a National Rifle Association conference to assure the audience that he opposes any new restrictions on gun ownership and views the right to bear arms as "just as important a part of the Constitution as the right to free speech and the other rights." On the same day, the nation's biggest gun manufacturers filed an appeal to overturn a ruling that had allowed a suit brought against them by Mayor Giuliani to proceed.

That lawsuit was filed in 2000 against 26 gun manufacturers and distributors for their "intentional and reckless" practices allegedly leading to gun violence. Congressional Republicans saw it as an attempt to achieve in the courts what the anti-gun lobby couldn't achieve through the legislative process. The gun-rights lobby fought back, and scored a victory when President Bush signed a law ordering the dismissal of lawsuits that attempted to hold gun manufacturers accountable for the actions of criminals. Candidate Giuliani now explains that the suit, which

current New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg is still pushing, "has taken several turns and several twists that I don't agree with." Apparently he still endorses the suit as originally conceived.

The only Republican mayor to participate in lawsuits against the gun industry, Giuliani claims he was merely trying to use every available tool to reduce crime in his city—including a novel theory of culpability and an activist judge who agreed with it.

Giuliani's misuse of the courts has not been limited to guns. When President Clinton signed long-overdue, GOP-style welfare reform in 1996, conservatives saw it as a triumph for the new congressional majority. But Mayor Giuliani declared, "We will not implement this law," and sued the Clinton administration to overturn provisions he disagreed with.

The welfare reform prohibited local jurisdictions from passing laws to prevent their officials from voluntarily disclosing information about the citizenship status of aliens. This conflicted with a 1989 New York City executive order signed by former mayor Ed Koch, which barred city officials from reporting immigration status to the INS. Mayor Giuliani supported this order—and, although the welfare reform didn't *mandate* that city officials report illegal aliens, he claimed that it would lead to their "indecent or inhumane treatment" by ending New York's "zone of protection for illegal and undocumented immigrants." He also challenged the constitutionality of a provision denying some welfare benefits to immigrants. In both cases, he lost: A federal court held that Congress has broad authority to legislate in the area of immigration.

In 1994, 59 percent of California voters approved Proposition 187, which denied a host of state benefits to illegal aliens. Within days, a court blocked the majority will, and four years later most of Proposition 187's provisions were overturned. Former California governor Pete Wilson fought the courts by filing an appeal (later abandoned by his successor). Mayor

Giuliani didn't join the suit against Prop 187, but he hailed the judge's decision to overturn it, telling immigration-rights activists, "Hopefully, the fate of Proposition 187—both its passage and its most recent defeat in court—will be markers of the start and end of this most recent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment."

When New York's state legislature repealed a 33-year-old commuter tax on state residents who worked in New York City, Mayor Giuliani sued. He argued that lawmakers had wrongly deprived his city of revenue. When the state's highest court upheld the tax repeal, Giuliani all but admitted he had mounted a frivolous chal-

lenge: "We expected that we would lose the case, so it doesn't come as a surprise to me."

In seeking to overturn legislation he opposed, Giuliani wasn't acting as a private attorney hired to make a client's case regardless of his personal views. Plaintiff Giuliani found enough merit in these suits to launch them in the first place. Candidate Giuliani explains that he now favors gun rights and tax relief, and he has taken a tougher position on immigration enforcement. What he hasn't explained is how his judicial philosophy has changed since his days as a litigious mayor.

Conservatives don't argue that it is always inappropriate to seek court action striking

down laws passed by democratically elected bodies. In a recent debate, Mitt Romney criticized Giuliani for suing President Clinton over the line-item veto Congress passed in 1996. That time Mayor Giuliani won his challenge: In a six-to-three decision, the Supreme Court found that the president's line-item-veto authority violated the Constitution's separation-of-powers doctrine. Justices Scalia and Thomas were on opposite sides of the case.

But Plaintiff Giuliani didn't take Clinton to court to vindicate an important constitutional principle. Clinton had used his line-item veto to strike a Medicaid-reimbursement provision that benefited New York City. Giuliani sued simply to

Candidate Giuliani explains that he now favors gun rights and tax relief. What he hasn't explained is how his judicial philosophy has changed since his days as a litigious mayor.

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protect his windfall, complaining that the veto “unfairly targets the city and state of New York.”

While Romney favors a version of the line-item veto that he believes would pass constitutional muster, Giuliani pledges to propose a constitutional amendment establishing a line-item veto. He explains, “The line-item veto is unconstitutional. You don’t get to ‘believe’ about it. The Supreme Court has ruled on it.” Here, Candidate Giuliani appears to endorse the proposition that, once the Supreme Court has spoken, an issue has been put to rest—in contrast with those who believe we are governed by the Constitution, not the Court. That position would have ruled out challenges to the Court’s abortion jurisprudence that saw a modified ban on partial-birth abortion upheld after a previous ban had been struck down.

Conservatives can only hope that President Giuliani—if such is our fate—can be counted on to appoint judges who would throw Plaintiff Giuliani out of court. **NR**

■ 2008 III

Trippi’d Out

John Edwards, his strategist, and a demagogic campaign

MARK HEMINGWAY

Ridgeland, S.C.

AT the Jasper County Democratic Party Banquet, the evening’s entertainment—in the loosest sense of that word—is a man in a black-sequined suit and cowboy hat trying to wing it through “My Way.”

Minutes before, one of the event organizers explained to a reporter that John Edwards had become the keynote speaker by default. The Jasper County Democrats had invited all the major candidates to this little palmetto hamlet, and Edwards was the first to reply. That’s probably the same way they selected the guy slaughtering Sinatra. After hearing both, you begin to learn a lesson about holding out for quality.

Nonetheless, Edwards has his charms. He’s pulled off a bit of political prestidigitation in getting the press to keep regarding him as a major candidate even as polls show him trailing the Democratic front-runner, Hillary Clinton, by a whopping 40 points or more.

In 2004, Edwards came within 120,000 votes of being vice president. What he says on the stump now suggests he has been through a radical transformation in the last four years. Listening to him, you wonder how he can be the same member of the moderate New Democrat Coalition who became conservative North Carolina’s junior senator in 1998.

Perhaps Edwards’s abandonment of centrist policies is the reason he has fallen so far since 2004. Word is that he’s been “Trippi-ized.” That would be Joe

Trippi, the legendary political consultant who first harnessed the power of the “netroots” for Howard Dean’s 2004 campaign and is now on the Edwards ’08 payroll. Trippi joined Edwards in the spring, and all summer the candidate’s spittle—and venom—was flying. Edwards seems to have tempered himself since then, but his willingness to go on the populist-liberal attack is still evident.

As he addresses the crowd at the Ridgeland Middle School auditorium, you can almost hear the thunderous reverberations of the U.S. Treasury’s cash register trying to keep up. Most Democrats are content to argue for more and better-funded Head Start programs. Not Edwards. “We ought to have universal preschool,” he tells the Jasper County Democrats. “Every single four-year-old in this country ought to be able to go to preschool. We ought to be able to go younger than that so that nutritional needs, health-care needs for two-, three-year-olds are met.” Edwards might be the only candidate literally advocating a nanny state.

But he doesn’t stop there. He proposes \$15,000 bonuses for rural teachers, the creation of a taxpayer-funded national teachers’ university, a series of new “second chance” schools for dropouts, and, finally, “college for everyone”: “We say to every young person in America: [If] you graduate from high school, if you’re actually willing to work ten hours a week when you’re in college, America will pay for your education at a public university or community college.”

His approach to health care is similarly dirigiste. “We need universal health care mandated for every man, woman, and child,” he declares. And by “universal” he appears to have in mind every quasi-medical procedure in the known universe. That means mental-health coverage, dental care, vision care, treatment for chronic conditions, and long-term elder care. And, of course, no preexisting medical conditions would disqualify anyone from receiving such coverage.

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Edwards might be the only candidate literally advocating a nanny state.

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"It costs \$90 to \$120 billion a year, but I have a way to pay for it. How about we get rid of George Bush's tax cuts for people that make over \$200,000 a year?" While \$120 billion a year may sound like a lot of money, it works out to only \$400 a year per American, or roughly \$33 a month. You can barely purchase vitamins for \$33 a month.

But Edwards would rather pander to the crowd than explain himself. Speaking of care for the elderly, he says, "A lot of y'all are going through what we're going through with Elizabeth's parents right now—you know it's hard enough to figure out what's the right thing to do without worrying about whether it's going to bankrupt you." So long-term care "will be covered." This allows Edwards to pretend that he experiences the problems of the middle class. But while many Americans are agonizing over how to pay for their parents' "golden" years, a man who lives in a 28,000-square-foot mansion is not.

As the campaign wears on, this is the Edwards the public is increasingly coming to know. The Edwards who told the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in August that he would ask Americans to give up their SUVs in favor of fuel-efficient cars, while aerial photos of his estate revealed a fleet of gas guzzlers; the Edwards who, a day after accusing Wal-Mart of treating its employees unfairly, sent a staffer to the local Wal-Mart to buy the latest Sony PlayStation for his children; the Edwards who announced his candidacy from the Ninth Ward of post-Katrina New Orleans, yet has a lucrative consulting gig and \$16 million invested with the Fortress Investment Group—a hedge fund whose sub-prime lending units foreclosed on 34 homes in the recovering city.

In his speech tonight we hear not a trace of moderation. "Look at what's happening in the world. I don't think George Bush has injured our reputation in the world—I think he's destroyed it!" Edwards bellows. And in a Democratic field where most of the intra-party attacks have been above the belt, the Edwards campaign tends to put a personal spin on all its critiques, thanks to Edwards's unrestrained wife Elizabeth. "She gets great press, she is bravely

battling cancer while keeping up an exhausting campaign schedule and, besides, she is not running for anything," noted Roger Simon in the *Politico*. "Which allows her to lash out without getting lashed back."

Elizabeth Edwards has claimed other candidates have selfish motivations in running for office; said Barack Obama is "holier-than-thou" for being against the Iraq War even though he continues to vote to fund it; suggested that her husband is at a disadvantage because he's not black or a woman; argued that Hillary lacks "courage" and all but demanded she apologize, as Edwards has,



for her vote authorizing the Iraq War; and accused Obama of stealing her husband's slogans and rhetoric from the 2004 campaign.

Elizabeth's attacks might reflect her relationship with Trippi. The campaign strategist is said to be closer to Elizabeth than to the candidate; supposedly she and he bonded over her cancer and his chronic neurological condition. But it's John's campaign, and, by bringing Trippi on board, he is casting aside his moderate past and sending the message that he

will not compromise. The *Washington Post* recently ran a front-page article summing up Trippi's influence on the campaign. Trippi is "an unapologetic believer in the power of liberal ideals," the article said, and "it's that message—a fiery, some say angry, populism—that has drawn attention to John Edwards of late."

But is it the right kind of attention? Trippi's influence and strategy are closely tied to Internet activists—and to not much else. In an October straw poll conducted by the hugely popular liberal blog DailyKos, Edwards won handily with 31 percent of the 12,000 votes. Christopher Dodd came in second, with 21 percent; Obama was third, at 16 percent; and Hillary Clinton was at 9 percent. Of course, these numbers largely invert national polling results—and that tells volumes.

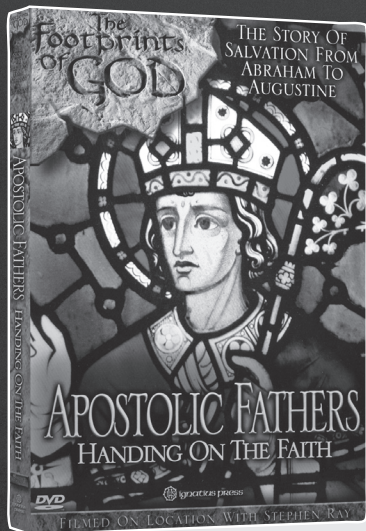
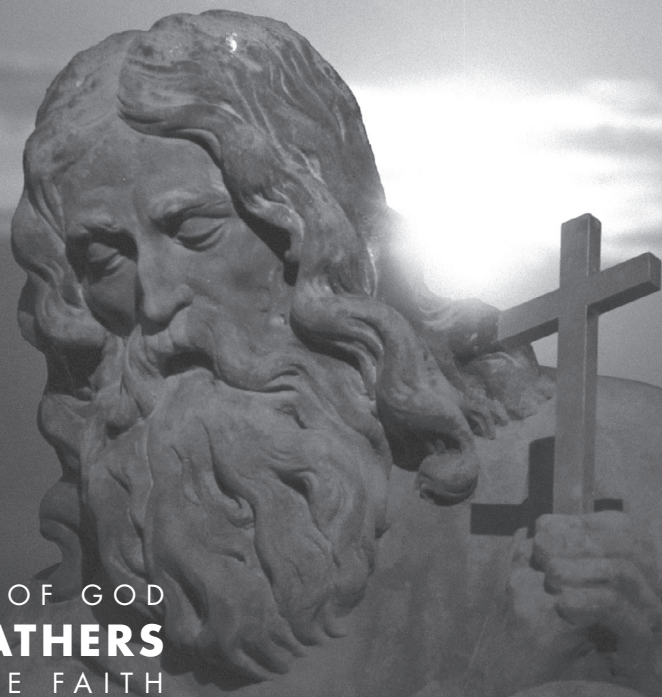
Trippi's Internet success with Howard Dean (before Dean's Iowa meltdown), combined with the general-election failure of John Kerry's more moderate approach in 2004, convinced many Democrats that future candidates would have to embrace the netroot-friendly, take-no-prisoners approach if they wished to succeed. There's a case to be made that Edwards is a flawed messenger. But what his pugnacious yet flailing campaign more probably shows is that the Dean Internet strategy is not replicable.

So Edwards will keep struggling, even as his angry-liberal flag flies high. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton touts her centrist record in the Senate, and doesn't seem to be paying much of a price for her Iraq vote. And despite Barack Obama's leftist policy ideas, his campaign has managed to convey a message of hope and unity—exactly the sort of pabulum found in traditional Democratic campaigns, and, as Elizabeth angrily noted, a message not far from John Edwards's in 2004. Like Hillary, Obama is comfortably ahead of Edwards in polls, both nationally and in early-primary states.

Edwards ends his speech with predictable unction: "We need an America that actually believes in the possibilities of all of us." Unfortunately, what he really needs is an America that believes in the possibility of a President John Edwards.

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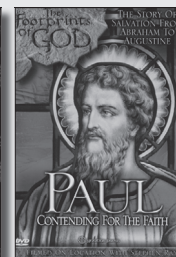
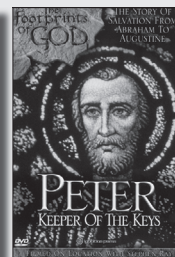
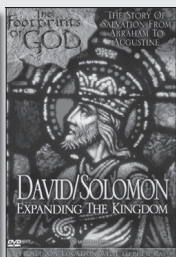
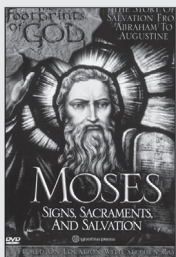
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Wild Weeks

Recent seesawing in the cousins' odd, post-Blair politics

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

Poor Harold Wilson used to be denounced for the cynical short-termism of his remark that "a week is a long time in politics." But the last few months in Britain have shown that Wilson, if anything, understated the case: Almost every week since Tony Blair resigned has upset the assumptions and calculations of the previous week.

The protagonists in this psychodrama are Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Tory leader David Cameron. Like two weathermen, when one is out in the sun, the other lurks beneath a cloud, and then vice versa.

Brown began his premiership in sunny weather. People were relieved that Blair—the magician who never managed to produce a rabbit from his innumerable hats—had finally gone. Brown was respected (as a formidable but overcontrolling leader) rather than liked on the day he entered Downing Street. But he at once surprised everyone by calmly delegating a series of crises to his cabinet colleagues rather than launching dramatic personal initiatives on the Blair model. Throughout the summer he continued to show a sure political touch. Those who feared he would abandon Blair's centrist New Labour approach were soothed when he set up a "big tent" and began persuading Tory MPs to assist his administration as "advisers." One even crossed the floor and became a Labour MP. This strategy reached its zenith when Brown entertained Lady Thatcher to tea at Downing Street.

Cameron himself could hardly complain: He had put on seven-league boots to distance himself from Thatcher upon his elevation to the leadership. But a Tory MP was allowed to disgrace himself by hinting slyly that the old girl was getting senile. This misfired badly. Overall, it looked as though New Labour were becoming a

grand national coalition while the Tories were splintering into a sullen rump. It also capped a bad summer for the Tories in which they had upset their supporters with a series of modish policy ideas—e.g., compulsory parking fees at out-of-town supermarkets to encourage city-center shopping and save the environment—intended to attract moderates but striking most people as just silly. Their situation looked increasingly bleak.

Brown then made the first of two mistakes that will haunt him for the rest of this parliamentary session—and perhaps for the remainder of his career. He let it be known that, contrary to his original intentions, he was minded to call an election in the fall. If Brown had never started these rumors or if he had allowed his acolytes to deny them firmly, the Tories would have torn themselves apart at their annual conference. Instead, the prospect of being hanged in a month concentrated their minds wonderfully.

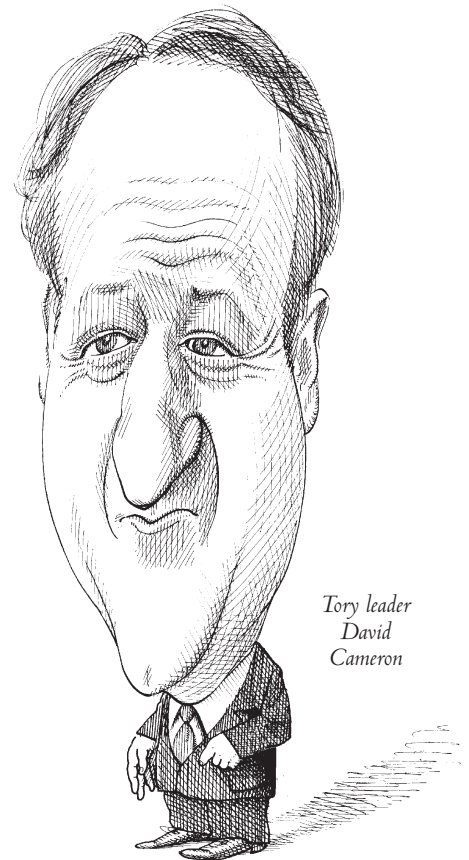
At their conference, the Tory faithful united around Cameron. In return, he and his lieutenants forgot half their wizard new wheezes—shadow finance minister George Osborne said he would be "off my trolley" to bring in supermarket parking fees—and dusted off such traditional Tory ideas as getting rid of inheritance tax for an emergency manifesto. Doubtless to their surprise (since Cameron and Osborne had genuinely believed that tax cuts were electoral poison), the Tories consequently shot ahead in the polls.

Brown brooded over these new polls in London. He was unwise to do so. A party conference almost always produces an opinion "bounce" for the party. It soon evaporates. On this occasion, however, Brown had a second set of polls to fret over. Lord (Michael) Ashcroft, deputy chairman of the Tory party, had been spending large sums of his \$1.6 billion personal wealth on campaigns in the so-called Labour marginals—seats where small Labor majorities might be easily overturned to produce a Tory victory even in a poor national election. Labour's own polls now showed the Tories ahead there. Suddenly a fall election no longer looked a sure thing.

Brown then made his second great mistake. He announced in a BBC interview that an election would not now be held until 2009 or later. It is impossible to exag-

gerate the impact of this announcement. Overnight the conventional wisdom of pundits and politicians was reversed. Brown was scorned as a nervous bungler, the youthful Cameron (who had delivered a confident speech without notes at the conference) hailed as a winner. All of Brown's clever maneuvers—especially his visit to British troops in Iraq to distract attention from the Tory conference—looked shoddy, manipulative, and miscalculated in the light of his timidity.

Above all, the mystique of "New Labour" was suddenly shattered. It no longer looked like a dominant party destined to be in power forever. (And had "New Labour" ever been more than a clever piece of sloganeering?) Brown suddenly began to get demands for a new "vision" distinctively non-Blairite. He showed no sign of having any such thing—perhaps fortunately, since political clarity would have alienated either the Left or the Right, the Labour party or Middle Britain. But he suddenly began to seem dull as well as doomed. Within an astonishingly short time, the "political class" had replaced the post-1997 orthodoxy of New Labour dominance with a new para-



Tory leader
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digm: Two-party politics was back, Brown and Labour had run out of ideas and confidence, and the Tories were clear favorites for a 2009 election.

What this new conventional wisdom ignored was the third party. Brown and Cameron had both risen and fallen in part because of shifts in support for the Liberal Democrats. This had fallen from 22 percent of the 2005 election vote to 13–14 percent just recently, in part as a result of the lackluster leadership of Sir Menzies “Ming” Campbell. Both main parties had gained some of this support at different times. Now the Lib-Dems decided to save themselves. The “nice” party despatched the elderly and unsure Ming with exemplary ruthlessness once the threat of an imminent election vanished. Ming’s two would-be successors, MPs Nick Clegg and Chris Huhne, are young, personable, well-educated toffs, both “green,” in the Cameron mold. Whoever wins, support for the Lib-Dems is likely to recover and both main-party leaders will thus be hurt—Brown because two youthful opponents will make him look stale, Cameron because he will have lost youthfulness as his unique selling proposition.

So the new conventional wisdom lasted less than a month.

Today, polls suggest that the two main parties are converging. The Tories are ahead but falling back; Labour is rising but still behind; and the considerable impact of a new Lib-Dem leader has yet to be felt. Economic and other troubles undoubtedly lie ahead to complicate Brown’s future. Hence the maxim: “Prime ministers who postpone elections lose them.” But a recent YouGov poll for the *Daily Telegraph*, though it put the Tories ahead by three points (41 to 38 percent), showed underlying strengths for Brown and weaknesses for Cameron. Thus, Labour is still more trusted to run the economy by three points; only 29 percent of voters would be “delighted” if Cameron won (39 percent would be “dismayed”); and Brown has a 16 percent lead over Cameron as the more experienced and reliable leader. Plainly there is all to play for on both sides.

It is an interesting coincidence that both Brown and Cameron will have to overcome the same two problems—“vision” and Europe—in order to win. Brown is thought to lack vision. More

likely, he knows that his private vision, namely a massively interventionist state, is unpopular with the electorate. Cameron has one vision too many. His first two years were spent campaigning for “modernization,” environmentalism, higher public spending, and the avoidance of traditional Tory themes such as immigration and tax cuts. Cameron’s prescription did not actually follow from his analysis. When Tory research showed that popular policies such as reducing immigration were harmed when labeled Tory, he issued instructions to avoid discussing immigration! Since the election scare, however, he has embraced the very policies he earlier shunned. However sensible such a U-turn may be, it also feeds the voters’ suspicion that he really doesn’t believe anything.

Europe is a test that both men seem determined to lose. By refusing to hold a referendum (promised by Labour at the last election) on the European constitutional treaty, Brown reinforces the suspicion that he is an authoritarian control-freak; Cameron, by wriggling to avoid a commitment to hold a referendum after the treaty is passed by Brown, reinforces the suspicion that he is not to be trusted.

Does America have a dog in this race? Not as yet. Neither man wants to be seen as pro-American. Both think that the U.S. is unpopular with key voting constituencies (read: Lib-Dem voters). Both want to be respected members of the European political establishment, which proscribes anything like overt pro-Americanism (unless you are French, when it is not taken seriously.) And both calculate that an “idealistic” foreign policy closely aligned with the U.S. would require a higher level of defense spending than is consistent with their plans for high levels of spending on social services.

If American conservatives want friends in British politics today, they must look to individual MPs such as the Tory front-benchers Michael Gove and Liam Fox, to think tanks such as the Center for Policy Studies, to Euroskeptical bodies such as Global Britain, and to the attempts by Tim Montgomerie of the influential website www.ConservativeHome.com to establish a conservative movement on the U.S. model, independent of the party formerly known as Conservative. **NR**

■ FRANCE

Le Divorce

Nicolas, Cécilia, and *le shrug français*

ROB LONG

THE French, as a rule, are excellent shruggers. Sit long enough in any café in France and you’ll experience firsthand the power of the shrug. The two young men to your left, engaged in what seems like a deeply felt philosophical conversation, will punctuate each long monologue with a sip of coffee and a shrug. The old man to your right, when presented with the bill, shrugs and presents a few coins. Inside, at the *comptoir*, people shrug before, during, and after ordering; they shrug at their neighbor; they shrug at the tiny little sachets of sugar; they turn to face the street, follow a girl with their eyes, shrug, turn back to their Chinon, and shrug a final time.

The shrug can mean many things, from “Life is this way; what can a person do?” to “We are no longer lovers” to “I prefer the Livarot to the Reblochon, but if you have no other cheese to offer, then I will take the Reblochon.”

Although you can’t quite make out his shoulders on the cover of a recent issue of *Paris Match*, newly elected president Nicolas Sarkozy is clearly shrugging. Scarf wrapped Gallically around his neck, eyebrows raised high enough to crinkle his forehead, he is going for a resigned “The end of a love affair brings pain. One knows that. And yet with the pain it brings opportunity for new pleasures. Such are the contradictions one must live with” kind of shrug.

I mean, I think that’s what it means. It’s a lot to read into a single photo of a half-visible shrug, but then, it would fit the situation. President Sarkozy and his often-absent, mercurial wife, Cécilia, have recently divorced, and the French media coverage of the event was surprising in that there *was* French media coverage of the event. The traditional French attitude to marital and extra-marital events among the political class is indif-

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ference. In Sarkozy's case, however, tradition has been tossed out the window. *Paris Match* has covered the drama over several weeks and in multi-page photo spreads; the lefty newspaper *Libération* called Cécilia Sarkozy a "Desperate Housewife"; even the old-mannish *Le Monde* has felt compelled to cover the divorce. "This is truly surprising," a French television producer told me a few weeks ago. "The press in France is very proper. Very decorous. We didn't cover this kind of thing with Mitterrand. And we didn't really cover the financial stuff with Chirac. But now . . ."

And then he shrugged.

Former president François Mitterrand, who managed to maintain a public wife and family in the Elysée Palace, and a not-so-public, not-so-married mistress and daughter in an apartment somewhere else, did so with the full complicity of the French media. Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy's direct predecessor, blithely withstood a long-simmering,

deeply entangled financial scandal—of the kind that in the U.S. or Great Britain would be politically crippling front-page material for weeks—because, in France, it was covered with intermittent non-enthusiasm and a discretion bordering on cover-up.

Sarko is not so lucky. He brought it on himself, of course, with his dashing around town, his pro-American stance, his evident love of the spotlight. The marriage had always been complicated (past divorces; children) and deeply French (she is a former fashion model, he is an ambitious politician; both have had semi-public affairs) and, it is roundly acknowledged, doomed. But Sarkozy's personal style has transformed the French presidency from one of fusty dinners and elegantly murmured negotiations to a scrappier, more pugnacious in-the-fray business. He has become a star, along with Johnny Hallyday and Princess Caroline of Monaco, and the price stars pay is a constant national interest in their life, loves, success, and heartbreak.

Appearing on the cover of *Paris Match* in his scarf and shrug, Sarkozy looked like a young Belmondo. His ex-wife, Cécilia, announcing a few days later that she had met someone else and had fallen in love, had a kind of woman-of-the-world glamour, like an updated Arletty, the French movie star of the 1930s and 1940s.

Last week, the French media, exhausted from covering the divorce, segued to covering the coverage of the divorce, and fretted that all of this intrusive tabloid-style Sarkozy-mania was a bit too Anglo-Saxon, a bit too American, *pas sophistiqué*. "We are becoming like you," a French friend of mine e-mailed to me, adding, in case I misinterpreted his meaning, a sad-face emoticon. But that's an overreaction. The French may be experiencing a tabloid awakening, but their interest in the Sarkozy divorce is, as of now anyway, strictly prurient. It's a failed

marriage like any other—a bit spicier than ordinary, but that's to be expected. Any political fallout from the divorce circus is going to be hard to detect. After all, Sarkozy's chief political rival, Socialist presidential candidate Ségolène Royal, also recently separated from her partner, François Hollande. Separated, but not divorced: Despite having four children together, the pair never married. One imagines a great deal of shrugging around the Royal-Hollande household.

If anything, the glamour of the Sarkozy divorce reinforces the differences between our two countries. Here, thrice-married candidates take cooing cellphone calls from their most recent wives mid-speech, in an ostentatious display of revolting lovey-doveyness. And certain frontrunners, married to internationally famous womanizing rascals, still maintain an "Everything's fine! Everything's fine!" delusion. When President Hillary Clinton finally takes office—oh come on! You *know* it'll happen, eventually—we're all going to have to pretend that we don't notice what we're noticing. We're going to have to pretend, because nobody wants to go through *that* again, that this is just a normal American marriage. The two of them are going to hold hands and get all huggy-touchy with each other—remember that famous "candid" photo of the two of them, dancing on the beach in St. Thomas?—and we're going to have to pretend we believe it, just to be polite. Of all the things I dread the most about the Hillary Clinton administration—tax hikes, nutty judges, Amtrak-style health care—it's this that I dread the most: We'll all be the kids standing under the big oak tree, with a smiling, tense Mom and Dad, getting an "Everything's Fine!" photo taken for the Christmas card. "Hey, Mom, why doesn't Dad live here anymore?" "Smile, dear." "Hey, Dad, who's that woman waiting in the car?" "Shut up, kid."

Say what you like about the French, but it's refreshing to see two adults split up like grown-ups, without a lot of tears and apologies and psychodrama. President Sarkozy looks into the *Paris Match* camera, tosses on a scarf, and shrugs. Cécilia lights a cigarette, says, "I have a new lover," takes a puff, and shrugs. Something to consider.

NR



C'est la vie.

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From the landmark book *Grow Young with HGH* comes the most powerful, over-the-counter health supplement in the history of man. Human growth hormone was first discovered in 1920 and has long been thought by the medical community to be necessary only to stimulate the body to full adult size and therefore unnecessary past the age of 20. Recent studies, however, have overturned this notion completely, discovering instead that the natural decline of Human Growth Hormone (HGH), from ages 21 to 61 (the average age at which there is only a trace left in the body) and is the main reason why the body ages and fails to regenerate itself to its 25 year-old biological age.

Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

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It is now thought that HGH is so comprehensive in its healing and regenerative powers that it is today, where the computer industry was twenty years ago, that it will displace so many prescription and non-prescription drugs and health remedies that it is staggering to think of.

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The Grim Truth

Republicans face a calamitous political situation; but they can act to avoid it

RAMESH PONNURU & RICHARD LOWRY

PESSIMISM can be self-fulfilling, especially in politics. There's a reason every candidate who has even a slight shot at victory tries to project a serene optimism about its inevitability. Volunteers, donors, voters: No one likes a loser. And there's so much pessimism about the Republican party's prospects in 2008 that it's understandable that some party officials and conservative pundits feel an urge to tilt the other way.

But for all the understandable natural resistance to pessimism,

it has its uses. Fear can be nature's way to get us to realize that we're in danger and to take appropriate action. Consider Iraq. If more supporters of the war had been willing to admit that the war was going badly in 2005–6, we might have undertaken the surge and switched our strategy earlier. Only after the Bush administration made that concession was it able to begin making progress on the ground.

Republicans shouldn't lurch into a paralyzing hopelessness



THINK 18-wheel air freshener

about 2008: They retain the power to change the national political environment in their favor. But neither should they content themselves with false reassurances that the environment is better than it looks. The plain truth is that the party faces a cataclysm, a rout that would give Democrats control of the White House and enhanced majorities in the House and the Senate. That defeat would, in turn, guarantee the confirmation of a couple of young, liberal Supreme Court nominees, putting the goal of moving the Court in a more constitutionalist direction out of reach for another generation. It would probably also mean a national health-insurance program that would irrevocably expand government involvement in the economy and American life, and itself make voters less likely to turn toward conservatism in the future.

This outcome is avoidable only if Republicans understand the sources of their unpopularity. Conservatives tend to blame their travails on Republican politicians' missteps and especially on their inability to communicate. But the public's unhappiness with Republicans goes much deeper than any such explanation. A mishandled war, coupled with intellectual exhaustion on the domestic front, has soured the public on them. It is not just the politicians but conservative voters themselves who are out of touch with the public, stuck in the glory days of the 1980s and not thinking nearly enough about how to make their principles relevant to the concerns of today. Unforeseen events could yet change the political environment radically. As it stands, Republicans are sleepwalking into catastrophe.

Even if the party were in good shape, it would face a daunting task in retaining the White House for a third term in a row. In the past 50 years, a party has won the White House three times in a row only once, when the first George Bush succeeded Reagan. Reagan then had an approval rating in the mid-50s. Bush is stuck some 20 points lower, at about freezing—territory where only Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter have been in recent memory. (David Frum's forthcoming book *Comeback* notes that no president has been so unpopular for so long since Hoover.) The other four times a party tried to follow up on two terms, it lost.

An unpopular president isn't the GOP's only woe. Pollster Scott Rasmussen has found that the percentage of Americans who consider themselves Republicans declined steadily from 37.1 in the 2004 election to 30.8 in May of this year. It has rebounded slightly since then to 32.6 in September, but Republicans still trail Democrats by about 5 points. Other polls have had more ominous numbers. In a Pew Research Center poll earlier this year that asked people which party they identified with or leaned toward, Democrats led Republicans 50 to 35 percent. Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute explains that the Reagan years saw a surge in Republican-party identification, and it has now washed away.

The political calendar and map are also conspiring against Republicans. In the Senate, Republicans have to defend 21 seats and Democrats only 12. They face tough races to retain seats in Minnesota, Maine, Oregon, New Hampshire, Virginia, Col-



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orado, and New Mexico, while vulnerable Democratic seats are hard to find.

In the House, Republicans have to pick up 16 seats, at the same time they are defending 14 seats (so far) where incumbents have retired. According to Rasmussen's latest poll, taken in early October, Americans prefer Democratic congressional candidates to Republicans 48 to 36 percent. It was the third month in a row that the Democrats enjoyed a double-digit advantage.

Election analyst Stu Rothenberg sees a 2- to 6-seat Republican loss in the Senate, with the House projecting somewhere in a band between a draw and a 12-seat Republican loss. That seems a very reasonable guess. Even a draw would be a serious setback. A lot of freshman Democrats won in squeakers in 2006. Next year is the best chance Republicans will ever have to unseat them. (Even Dick Gephardt's House Democrats took back a quarter of the seats they lost in 1994 at the next election.) If they do not even make progress in regaining a majority, we may be looking at a Democratic Congress for many years to come.

Democrats will be able to fight on this favorable terrain with more resources than Republicans. The RNC has done well

dramatic decline of crime in the 1990s ended the first two as Republican "wedge issues," and there is little demand for more tax cuts after Bush repeatedly cut them. Gallup has been asking people a question about levels of taxation since 1947, and almost always the answer comes back that people think they are being taxed too much. But lately "about right" has been catching up to "too high."

The cause of limited government has been indirectly hurt by these changes as well. The Republican assault on government was at its most potent when big government was associated with liberal cultural values, which it was in the age of unreformed welfare. In his 1996 campaign, Bill Clinton attempted to wed government to middle-class values through micro-initiatives. Hillary Clinton, with a raft of middle-class spending proposals, will attempt the same thing, but with greater ambition. Bill Clinton's signature middle-class pander in 1996 was the V-chip, a device to help parents control their kids' TV-viewing, which was popular and trivial. S-CHIP, this year's goodie for the middle class, is popular and consequential.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the Democratic advantage

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the Democratic advantage on domestic issues: If it's an issue, they lead.

against the DNC, outraising it \$63 million to \$40.5 million, with a cash-on-hand advantage of \$16.5 million to \$3.3 million. Otherwise, Democrats are winning the money race going away. Democratic presidential candidates have raised a stunning \$200 million, 70 percent more than the Republican candidates. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee leads the National Republican Senatorial Committee 2 to 1. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee had \$22.1 million on hand as of August, the National Republican Congressional Committee only \$1.6 million (it started the year \$16 million in debt).

Throughout the Clinton and Bush years, the Republican campaign committees had a fundraising edge. Money helped Republicans hold on to Congress in difficult years such as 1996, and softened defeat even in 2006. In 2008, House Republicans could have just as many retirements and just as tough a national environment as last year—but with much less cash.

The NRCC is still collecting PAC money, even though business is now hedging its bets. (*USA Today* reports that Democratic presidential candidates have raised nearly twice as much as Republicans among the 20 top-giving industries.) But two sources of cash have dried up. Republican members who used to have extra money to give to other candidates are now worried about their own races. And individual donations are down. Liberal 527s overwhelmed California representative Richard Pombo last year. It may be easier to overwhelm Republicans next year. Minority parties have trouble raising money.

A WORN-OUT TRIAD

The issue terrain isn't any better. The great Republican triad of welfare, crime, and taxes is worn out. Welfare reform and the

on domestic issues: If it's an issue, they lead. According to Rasmussen, they lead as the party that people trust more to handle health care by 21 points, Social Security by 16 points, education by 13 points, and government ethics by 8 points. The Democratic lead extends even into traditional Republican territory. In a July *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll, Democrats had a 25-point advantage over the GOP on cutting deficits, 16 points on controlling spending, 15 points on dealing with the economy, and 9 points on taxes. Democrats enjoy a 20-point lead in the Gallup poll question on which party is better suited to sustain the country's prosperity, reversing the result from the Reagan years.

Traditionally, in a threatening international environment, Republicans have been able to make up whatever ground they might lose domestically with their strength on national security. Bush wouldn't have won in 2004 without his 18-point advantage on the War on Terror. Now the war in Iraq has eliminated the GOP's edge on national security. It is viewed as a war of choice, and—worse—a war of choice that has been conducted badly. It has soured the public on Republicans generally, but most of all it has damaged the party's reputation as responsible statesmen. On Iraq, according to Rasmussen, Democrats lead by 4 points, and on national security and the War on Terror, they trail by only 4 points. It is remarkable that the Republicans are still doing so well on this front, but the large advantage they used to have is gone.

Republicans hope that progress in Iraq will bring about a dramatic improvement in the national political environment. We share that hope. But even if events in Iraq go well, we will have plenty of days of bad news. The public will continue to be impatient about our engagement there, and unhappy about how we got

AS HEARD ON PAUL HARVEY NEWS Famous EdenPURE® portable heater that can cut your heating bill up to 50% is now much better

Heats a large room in minutes with even heat wall to wall and floor to ceiling

Does not get hot, cannot start a fire and will not reduce humidity or oxygen

By John Whitehead,
Media Services

The famous infrared portable heater, the EdenPURE®, which can cut your heating bills by up to 50%, has been greatly improved.

The new heater heats better, faster, saves more on heating bills and runs almost silent.

You have probably heard about the remarkable EdenPURE® as heard on Paul Harvey News and on television features across the nation.

The EdenPURE® can pay for itself in a matter of weeks and then start putting a great deal of extra money in your pocket after that.

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A major cause of residential fires in the United States is portable heaters. But the EdenPURE® cannot cause a fire. That is because the quartz infrared heating element never gets to a temperature that can ignite anything.

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The advanced space-age EdenPURE® Quartz Infrared Portable Heater also heats the room evenly, wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling. And, as you know, portable heaters only heat an area a few feet around the heater. With the EdenPURE®, the temperature will not vary in any part of the room.

Unlike other heating sources, the EdenPURE® cannot put poisonous carbon monoxide into a room or any type of fumes or any type of harmful radiation.

Q. What is the origin of this amazing heating element in the EdenPURE®?

A. This advanced heating element was discovered

Never be cold again



**Cannot start a fire; a child or animal
can touch or sit on it without harm**

accidentally by a man named John Jones.

Q. What advantages does infrared quartz tube heating source have over other heating source products?

A. John Jones designed his heating source around the three most important consumer benefits: economy, comfort, and safety.

In the EdenPURE® system, electricity is used to generate infrared light which, in turn, creates a very safe heat.

After a great deal of research and development, very efficient infrared heat chambers were developed that utilize three unique patented solid copper heat exchangers in one EdenPURE® heater.

Q. How can a person cut their heating bill by up to 50% with the EdenPURE®?

A. The EdenPURE® will heat a room in minutes. Therefore, you can turn the heat down in your house to as low as 50 degrees, but the

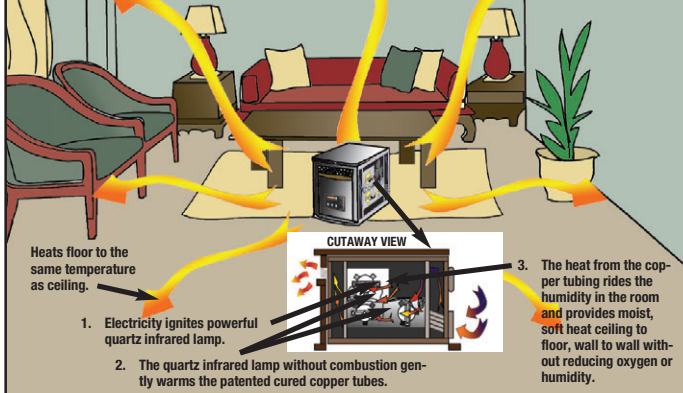
room you are occupying, which has the EdenPURE®, will be warm and comfortable. The EdenPURE® is portable. When you move to another room, it will quickly heat that room also. This can drastically cut heating bills, in some instances, by up to 50%.

The EdenPURE® heater is now greatly improved. The EdenPURE® comes in 2 models. Model 500-XL heats a room up to 300 square feet and Model 1000-XL heats a room up to 1,000 square feet.

End of interview.

Readers who wish can obtain the EdenPURE® Quartz Infrared Portable Heater at a \$75 discount if they order in the next 10 days. Please see the Special Reader's Discount Coupon on this page. For those readers ordering after 10 days from the date of this publication, we reserve the right to either accept or reject order requests at the discounted price.

How it works:



New Model Improvements

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not only eliminate the problems of a mechanical thermostat, but it is set to a much tighter tolerance. This will promote an extremely more comfortable even stable heat.

3) The 1000-XL features digital controls. It has a simple 3 large button control which turns the unit on, and you set the comfort level that you want which reads out on the front of the unit. It also has a remote control so you can adjust the comfort level without getting up.

4) The 500-XL has a single on/off switch and adjustable digital thermostat.

5) The XL is much more reliable. The thermostat and electronics are all solid state and the infrared bulbs are greatly improved to last for a very long time.

SPECIAL READER'S DISCOUNT COUPON

The price of the EdenPURE® Model 500-XL is \$372 plus \$17 shipping for a total of \$389 delivered. The Model 1000-XL is \$472 plus \$27 shipping and handling for a total of \$499 delivered. People reading this publication get a \$75 discount with this coupon and pay only \$297 delivered for the Model 500-XL and \$397 delivered for the Model 1000-XL if you order within 10 days. The EdenPURE® comes in the decorator color of black with burled wood accent which goes with any decor. There is a strict limit of 3 units at the discount price - no exceptions please.

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there in the first place. If Republicans are lucky, their national-security advantage will reassert itself. But it is unlikely to recover to its past size.

That leaves social issues, which have been a major strength of the Republican party for four decades. By themselves, however, they are unlikely to offset Republican disadvantages on foreign and domestic policy. In Hillary Clinton, the likely Democratic nominee, Republicans will be facing a self-professed moderate, one who claims to oppose same-sex marriage and even abortion. Republicans may have a hard time unmasking her social liberalism, particularly if Rudy Giuliani gets the nomination. On abortion, Giuliani is genuinely closer to the center of American opinion than Clinton and her party: He opposes partial-birth abortion and federal funding, while she supports these things. But his moderate positions may be of too recent vintage for him to make effective use of the contrast. In the 2004 election, “values voters” split 80–20 for Bush over Kerry. If that election had been fought over the War on Terror and health care alone, George W. Bush would have lost it. Does anyone expect either issue to work better for Republicans in 2008?

Too many conservatives have been doing what liberals always accuse us of doing: trying to recapture an imagined past.

Republican optimists tend to discount all this on the theory that Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi will save them. Clinton’s flaws as a candidate are well-known. Fifty percent of Americans said in a Zogby poll in October 2007 that they would definitely not vote for her. She is not the great political talent of her family. The public does not want to see the Bush-Clinton years stretch into a third decade. At the moment, however, the public wants a continuation of Republican rule even less. We can be confident that Clinton will not win in a blowout. But she can achieve a comfortable victory if she persuades only a tiny fraction of the voters who now say that they are dead-set against her. If the political climate does not improve greatly for Republicans, she will not have to have exceptional talent to do that. She will need only to run a competent, tough, and disciplined campaign, which she will do. Already, on the basis of her nearly flawless primary campaign, her favorable ratings have been inching up above 50 percent.

The Congress has even lower ratings than President Bush, which offers Republicans further hope. But that hope, too, is illusory. Some of the decline in congressional approval ratings since Pelosi’s crew took over surely stems from the Left’s discovery that Congress cannot not stop the war (or end the Bush administration). That disillusionment will not generate any new votes for Republicans, or even keep Democrats from turning out to vote for president. The low esteem for Congress also reflects the way in which the public’s typical sourness toward the political class in general has curdled, in recent years, into out-and-out bitterness. That mood may inflict damage on both parties. But the Republicans are still seen as the party in charge, since they have the White House, so it stands to reason that they will lose more.

It isn’t as though hostility to the Democratic Congress has led to any public demand that Republicans retake control of it.

Democratic congressmen—particularly backbenchers from safe districts—may well go too far left for the country, proposing broad-based tax increases or insulting the military. But as long as most Democratic officeholders, and especially the presidential nominee, avoid such excesses, voters will not hold it against the party as a whole.

THE CURSE OF NOSTALGIA

Instead of finding their footing in the country’s new political terrain, too many conservatives have been doing what liberals always accuse us of doing: trying to recapture an imagined past. The Republican presidential candidates are all presenting themselves, in ham-handed ways, as the next Reagan. They are reminiscent of the Democrats of the 1980s who harked back to FDR, oblivious to how the country and its politics had changed since their hero’s heyday. It is entirely understandable that the most successful Republican president of the last century should inspire emulation, especially against the backdrop of a disap-

pointing Republican incumbent. When conservatives seek a candidate with Reagan’s political skills, they merely have unrealistic expectations. But Reagan’s example is also being used to push Republicans toward a counterproductive strategy.

The theory is that Reagan showed that adherence to conservative principle is a winning political platform, that Republicans have suffered because they abandoned such principle, and that the path to recovery is therefore to raise our banners high again. So conservatives have claimed that voters punished Republicans’ overspending in 2006. There is some truth here. Pork-barrel spending did indeed contribute to the justified perception that Republican congressmen were more interested in perpetuating their power than in any constructive agenda for the nation. But most of the overspending of the last few years has not been on pork, but on such things as education programs and prescription drugs for seniors. There is, alas, no evidence that the public dislikes such spending. Conservatives, in particular, voted for Republicans in 2006 in roughly the same numbers that they always do. Independents, on the other hand, ran far away from Republican candidates. And while they tell pollsters that they would like less spending, they are enthusiastic about particular spending programs. Spending restraint is extremely important as a policy, but it is not going to revive the Republican brand.

Reagan’s success was not, in any case, the result of his slavish adherence to conservative doctrine. In saying that, we do not mean to join his latter-day liberal admirers, who are warmest in their praise for his mistakes, such as the partial reversal of the 1981 tax cuts that he signed in 1982. Our point, rather, is that Reagan’s merit was to apply conservative insights to the challenges of his moment. To combat inflation he embraced sound



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He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at \$42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.



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money; to revive growth he enacted tax cuts; to end the energy crisis he eliminated price controls; to stop liberals from imposing their social views on the country he enlisted new allies and sought to appoint sound judges; and to counter the Soviet Union he strengthened our military defense and our ideological offense. Parts of that agenda are unfinished, but more of it is outdated because it was finished triumphantly. For conservatives to ask their candidates to recreate the Reagan formula is to distract them from the more important task of finding conservative solutions to today's challenges. Instead of harking back to him, in other words, we need to do what he did.

Our distorted memory of Reagan accounts for one of the most striking features of this primary campaign: how backward-looking it has been. In any election season there will be some attention paid to the candidates' records and some to their plans. This time around we have dwelt a lot on the candidates' past offenses: on John McCain's vote against tax cuts in 2001, or Rudolph Giuliani's support for gun control in the late 1990s, or Mitt Romney's distancing himself from Reagan in 1994, or Thompson's lobbying in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, conserva-

son, who still hasn't)—to the seeming indifference of rank-and-file conservative voters.

Instead, the competition is taking Republicans farther and farther away from a connection with the public. Giuliani has broken with the base of the party, but only in ways that will not help with the larger electorate. And to make up for those deviations on social issues, he is projecting a bring-it-on bellicosity that conservatives like but that most voters simply do not feel. Romney and Thompson, meanwhile, are fighting over who is the most conventional, paint-by-numbers conservative circa 1987. Creative domestic policy is off the table.

CHANGE A-COMIN'

In past periods of Republican weakness, such as the late 1970s and early 1990s, conservatives were able to revive the party by yanking it to the populist right, especially on taxes. The next Republican revival, if it takes place, will involve a change within conservatism as much as an increase in its power over the party.

For three decades, the Republican party has absorbed increas-

While Republicans are depressed these days, their condition is actually worse than they think it is.

tives have not managed to extract a detailed tax plan from any of these candidates. Our balance has gone badly awry.

So while Republicans are depressed these days, their condition is actually worse than they think it is. The deepest cause of the party's malaise is not the inadequacies of the presidential field. It is that the party's base is out of step with the public. On issue after issue, polls find independents lining up with Democrats.

Take the economy. Republicans are much happier with their economic circumstances than Democrats: 81 percent of the former, and only 54 percent of the latter, express satisfaction. Independents are exactly where the Democrats are. At their recent economic debate, however, most of the Republican candidates essentially advised dissatisfied Americans to look up some economic statistics to see how well things are going. The ones who acknowledged public gloom proffered protectionism as a remedy.

Or take global warming. The public thinks it is real and worrisome, but is not ready to embrace liberal policies that would drastically reduce economic growth. Republicans would have an opening here, if so many of them had not persuaded themselves that global warming is a hoax.

If the public debate is confined to a choice between people who brush off public concerns and those who offer bad solutions, the latter group will win. Conservatives, right now, are not offering better solutions. And because the Republican base is not demanding those solutions, the competitive dynamic of the primary is not producing them. For most of the year, the Republican presidential debates have featured barely a word about health care, the public's most pressing domestic concern. The leading GOP candidates have belatedly put out plans (except for Thomp-

ing numbers of socially conservative working-class and middle-class voters while losing affluent social liberals—until the 2006 elections, in which Republican totals fell among every category of voter except for full-spectrum conservatives. The most plausible path toward a renewed center-right majority involves consolidating and deepening the trend of the decades before 2006: holding on to as much of the existing conservative coalition as possible while adding more downscale voters who lean right on social issues.

That task will force conservatives to explain how free-market policies can address the economic anxieties of this group of voters. We don't have to support "universal coverage" on health care. But we ought to talk more about health care than about the budget; and when we talk about health care, we should explain how Republican policies will help people keep and control their own health care. We don't have to abandon attempts to reform the tax code and to drop the top tax rate. But we should put much more effort into providing tax relief for middle-class parents. We don't have to open the borders. But we should make it clear that our immigration policy isn't based on anger. We don't have to give up on the idea that sometimes the U.S. must fight wars, even going it alone; but we need to persuade people that we see unilateral military action as a last resort—that we're not spoiling for a fight.

The bad news for conservatives is that we can't blame other people for our troubles. The good news is that if our problems are of our own making they are also within our control. If we address them now, we may not need to undergo a stretch out of power to right ourselves. But the first step toward recovery is admitting that we have a problem.

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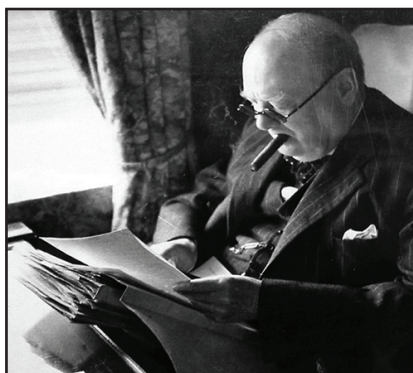
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Dr. J. Rufus Fears (Ph.D., Harvard University) is David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. A 21-time award winner for outstanding teaching, he has three times been named "Professor of the Year" by the University of Oklahoma. He has published four books and more than 100 articles.

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Fifty Flowers Bloom

Conservative think tanks — mini-Heritage Foundations — at the state level

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN word of Al Gore's Nobel Peace Prize reached a gathering of free-market wonks at the Portland Marriott in Maine on October 12, it met with a mix of mockery and disbelief. "Now he joins the ranks of Jimmy Carter and Yasser Arafat," muttered one attendee in a hallway. They were able to laugh it off in part because they were in the presence of Trent Seibert of the Tennessee Center for Policy Research, a.k.a. "the Al Gore guy." A day earlier, he had shared his story with them.

On a Sunday evening last February, Seibert found himself watching the Oscars. "When Gore won his award for best documentary, I decided that first thing in the morning, I would look up the public records for his electric bills," he says. By the middle of Monday afternoon, just as Gore was supposed to be enjoying a victory lap for *An Inconvenient Truth*, his global-warming movie, Seibert's inquiry had exposed Gore as an energy glutton whose Nashville mansion devoured twice as much electricity in one month as the average U.S. household used in a whole year. "Gore deserves a gold statue in hypocrisy," said a press release from the Tennessee Center.

It was a triumph of investigative reporting. Yet the story didn't break on the pages of the *New York Times* or before the cameras of *60 Minutes*. Instead, it owed everything to a member of the State Policy Network, a consortium of right-leaning think tanks that crusade for limited government in state capitals rather than Washington. Just a few years ago, the Tennessee Center existed only in the mind of its twenty-something founder, Drew Johnson. Today, however, it's a rising star in a growing movement. At a time when the Right is still reeling from a string of political defeats and bracing for the possibility of more, the Tennessee Center and its sister organizations may serve as a source of future success. They not only take on political adversaries, but also incubate many of the policy ideas that animate conservatism.

A generation ago, there were only a handful of conservative and libertarian think tanks—and most of them, such as the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute, concentrated on the White House and Congress. Following the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, however, many Republicans began to promote the "New Federalism," in which Washington would cede some of its authority to officials at the state and local level.

The late South Carolina businessman Thomas A. Roe, an occasional member of Reagan's "kitchen cabinet," supported this trend, but also anticipated a new challenge: Bureaucrats in Albany, Austin, and Sacramento weren't necessarily better than those in Washington. In a conversation with Reagan, Roe mentioned that there ought to be an effort to keep them honest—something like a

Heritage Foundation in each of the states. The president replied with a suggestion: "Do something about it." Roe took his advice. In 1986, he founded the South Carolina Policy Council. Around the same time, similar groups were forming in Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, and elsewhere. They began to meet at the Madison Hotel in Washington and called themselves the Madison Group. In 1992, Roe bankrolled the creation of the State Policy Network, an umbrella organization to help them grow.

Today, SPN is bigger than ever before. Its membership boasts 52 think tanks in 45 states. Their combined annual revenues add up to roughly \$40 million. "We're all comrades in arms," says Carl Helstrom, SPN's chairman and executive director of the JM Foundation, which provides grants to SPN members. In October, at SPN's annual conference, president Tracie Sharp announced a new initiative to expand think-tank revenues by \$50 million over the next five years.

They're going to need it: The Democracy Alliance, led by mega-rich liberals such as George Soros and Tim Gill, has devoted tens of millions of dollars to left-wing causes and candidates, including many on the state level. Last year, Gill's spending in particular helped Colorado Democrats sweep into office.

Members of SPN don't become directly involved with candidates. As nonprofit groups, they're prohibited from overt electioneering. Yet they help develop many of the ideas that rightward candidates can run on. In 1990, when reform-minded Republican John Engler sought the governorship of Michigan, much of his brain trust resided at the Mackinac Center, one of the oldest and largest of the state think tanks, with a budget of more than \$4 million. "People used to say that the Mackinac Center was a front for Engler," says Joe Olson, one of the think tank's founders. "Later on, they said that Engler was a front for the Mackinac Center." Though the relationship frayed over the course of Engler's three terms, they achieved a great deal together, such as promoting charter schools and competitive contracting. Since then, Engler has left Lansing, but the Mackinac Center continues to fight for its principles—most recently by proposing alternatives to a massive tax hike just approved by the state's Democrats.

Engler isn't the only public official to have formed an alliance with a state think tank. A handful of successful politicians have used SPN organizations as political springboards. In the House of Representatives, three prominent conservatives used to run state think tanks: Jeff Flake of the Goldwater Institute in Arizona, Mike Pence of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation, and Tom Tancredo of the Independence Institute in Colorado. "It was a formative experience for me," says Pence.

'APPLIED POLICY'

Yet candidate training is at best a byproduct of what these think tanks exist to do—and the most adept SPN members don't sit around and wait for politicians to discover them. "Research is our main purpose," says Darcy Olsen, president of the Goldwater Institute. "We're in the business of applied policy." The institute is widely credited with several important free-market achievements in Arizona, such as a law that lets disabled kids and those in foster care take advantage of school vouchers and another that offers tax credits for private-school scholarships.

In 2004, to the exasperation of business and political leaders, Arizona voters rejected a ballot measure that would have allowed

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By John Fleming

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public universities to own stock in private companies. “I am disappointed,” said Gov. Janet Napolitano, a Democrat. “There was really no organized opposition, except from the Goldwater Institute.” The think tank didn’t run an ad campaign. Instead, it merely issued a report on the dangers of letting arms of the state government compete with private enterprise. Last year, Olsen won SPN’s annual Roe Award for her leadership.

This summer, the Goldwater Institute launched a litigation center, hiring school-choice legal eagle Clint Bolick to run it. “We realized that on some issues we needed to go to court or we wouldn’t be able to change anything,” says Olsen. Although a few public-interest law firms focus on state-level issues, Bolick’s outfit is the first to be housed permanently within an SPN think tank. It has already sued the Arizona state government for trying to regulate charter-school curricula and using taxpayer dollars to fund the construction of a shopping mall.

This is by no means the first time a state think tank has lawyered up. Seven years ago, the Evergreen Freedom Foundation, based in the state of Washington, decided to challenge the Washington Education Association’s practice of using compulsory union dues

of snail mail. “We trade information all the time and borrow ideas from each other,” says Gary Palmer of the Alabama Policy Institute. Last year, Michael Sanera of North Carolina’s John Locke Foundation read a Mackinac Center report on government-owned golf courses in Michigan. “I decided that we should look into it here,” he says. Sanera discovered 35 of them in his own state and wrote a report recommending their privatization. When the city council of Sanford approved a new business tax earlier this year, opponents were able to point to Sanera’s research on the municipal golf course, which was losing about as much money as the new tax was meant to generate. “The Locke Foundation was a great resource,” says Mike Stone, a city councilman who voted against the tax increase. “It provided a lot of information and background material.” Several candidates for Sanford’s city council are now campaigning to repeal the tax.

Sometimes the Lockceans make national news. Remember the bird’s-eye photo of the 28,200-square-foot mansion owned by Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards, who spends most of his time hectoring audiences about inequality in the “two Americas”? The guy who snapped the picture was Don Carrington,



for political purposes without obtaining permission from workers. “We saw it as a simple campaign-finance violation,” says Bob Williams, Evergreen’s founder and president. It turned into a protracted legal battle that cost Evergreen more than \$1 million. The investment paid off last June, when the Supreme Court ruled against the teachers union in a decision that may be applied to other states with paycheck-protection laws. “The unanimous verdict was a stunning victory for the [Evergreen Freedom Foundation] and a crushing defeat” for the union, said an editorial in the *Olympian*, a daily newspaper in Washington’s capital.

As with most SPN members, the bulk of Evergreen’s financial support comes from individual contributions. “Corporations won’t touch us because we take on the unions,” says Williams. Despite these obstacles, Evergreen has more than doubled in size since filing the case. Its current budget is \$2.5 million and its staff of 24 includes one person who works exclusively on helping other SPN groups implement their own legal strategies.

SUCCESSES QUIET AND LOUD

Most SPN success stories fail to attract attention outside the borders of their states, but they nevertheless represent advances for free-market public policies. Earlier this year, Missouri became the first state to let small-business owners make pre-tax contributions to the individual health plans of their employees—a reform that provides more consumer choice and flexibility in health care and keeps the government at arm’s length. The bill probably wouldn’t have been written or passed without the involvement of the two-year-old Show Me Institute, based in St. Louis.

From the start, SPN has demanded that members share their publications with each other—a rule with roots in the pre-Internet age

executive editor of *Carolina Journal*, an organ of the Locke Foundation. He’s also a skydiver. Carrington had been shooting photos from the air to document stories he’d written on the questionable land deals of Mike Easley, North Carolina’s Democratic governor. When he received a tip about the huge Edwards estate, he took to the skies. In January, the Drudge Report carried his photo and the online traffic nearly crippled the Locke Foundation’s website.

Not every member of SPN is a top-flight think tank with a target as big as Gore or Edwards. Some struggle for attention and influence, owing to lousy leadership or a poor political climate. Five states have no SPN presence at all, and one of them is Louisiana—an unfortunate vacuum, given the recent election of the GOP’s Bobby Jindal to the governorship. He’s precisely the type of idea-fueled politician who could benefit from a partnership. (The other states without SPN think tanks are Delaware, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.) And to put things in further perspective, the combined revenues of the existing wonk shops are still smaller than the Heritage Foundation, whose budget this year is \$50 million.

Where SPN members are energetic and effective, however, they can drive liberals absolutely batty—to the point of calling for boycotts and de facto censorship. In September, *Rocky Mountain News* columnist Jason Salzman bemoaned the influence of Colorado’s Independence Institute and its \$1.5 million budget: “You don’t have to be much of a news junkie to know that the Independence Institute is in the local news way too often.” He went on to urge reporters, who aren’t normally known for their free-market biases, to avoid citing the group and its scholars. “The left-wingers sure don’t like it when we get our word out,” says Jon Caldara, the think tank’s chief. “We must be saying some very dangerous things about freedom.”

NR

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (2)

Should we re-examine endlessly repeated clichés?

In a previous installment in this series of clarifying messages about Israel and the Middle East, we examined certain myths which, by dint of constant repetition, had acquired currency and acceptance. We looked at the myth of "Palestinian nationhood," the myth of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") being "occupied territory," the myth that Jewish settlements in these territories are "the greatest obstacle to peace," and the myth that Israel is unwilling to "yield land for peace." And we cleared up the greatest myth of all, namely that Israel's administration of the territories, and not the unrelenting hatred of the Arabs against the Jews, is the root cause of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. But those are not all the myths; there are more. Myth: The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

What are more of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The Arabs of Israel are a persecuted minority.

Reality: The over one million non-Jews (mostly Arabs) who are citizens of Israel have the same civil rights that Jews have. They vote, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and are part of Israel's civil and diplomatic service, just as their Jewish fellow citizens. Arabs have complete religious freedom and full access to the Israeli legal, health and educational systems – including Arabic and Muslim universities. The only difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews is that Jewish young men must serve three years in the military and at least one month a year until age 50. Young Jewish women serve for two years. The Arabs have no such civic obligation. For them, military service is voluntary. Not too surprisingly, except for the Druze, very few avail themselves of the privilege.

■ **Myth:** Having (ill-advisedly) already given up control of the Gaza Strip, Israel should also give up the administration of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") because strategic depth is meaningless in this age of missiles.

Reality: Israel is a mini-state – about half the size of San Bernardino county in California. If another, even smaller mini-state were carved out of it, Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of 100 retired U.S. generals and admirals. If the Arabs were to occupy whatever little strategic depth Israel has between the Jordan River and its populated coast, they would not need any missiles. Artillery and mortars would suffice, since Israel would be only nine miles wide at its waist. Those who urge such a course either do not understand the situation or have a death wish for Israel.

■ **Myth:** If Israel would allow a Palestinian state to arise in Judea and Samaria it would be a democratic state and would be totally demilitarized.

Countless "peace conferences" to settle this festering conflict have taken place. All have ended in failure because of the intransigence of the Arabs. President Clinton, toward the end of his presidency, convened a conference with the late unlamented Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, the prime minister of Israel at that time. Mr. Barak offered virtually everything that Arafat had requested, except the partition of Jerusalem and the acceptance of the so-called refugees, their descendants having swollen from the 650,000 who fled the nascent state of Israel during the War of Liberation, to an incredible 5 million. Arafat left in a huff and started his infamous intifada instead, a bloody war that has cost thousands of Palestinian and Israeli lives. Israel is America's staunchest ally and certainly its only true friend in that area of the world. It is in our national interest that reality, not myths, govern our policy.

Reality: There is no prospect at all that anything resembling a democratic state could be created in the territories. There is not a single democratic Arab state – all of them are tyrannies of varying degrees. Even today, under partial Israeli administration, Hamas and other factions fight for supremacy and ruthlessly murder each other. Another Lebanon, with its incessant civil wars, is much more likely. The lawlessness and chaos that prevail in Gaza since Israel's withdrawal is a good prospect of what would happen if

**"It is in our national interest that reality,
not myths, govern our policy."**

Israel – foolishly and under the pressure of "world opinion" – were to abandon this territory. As for demilitarization, that is totally unlikely. Because – with Syria, Iraq,

Jordan and Saudi Arabia, most of which are in a declared state of war with Israel, at its borders – an irresistible power vacuum would be created. Despite pious promises, the arms merchants of the world would find a great new market and the neighboring hostile Arab countries would be happy to supply anything else that might be needed.

■ **Myth:** Israel should make "confidence-building gestures" for the sake of peace.

Reality: What really is it that the world expects Israel to do for the sake of peace? Most of the 22 Arab countries consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and don't even recognize its "existence." That has been going on for almost sixty years. Isn't it about time that the Arabs made some kind of a "gesture?" Could they not for instance terminate the constant state of war? Could they not stop launching rockets into Israel from areas that Israel has abandoned for the sake of peace? Could they not stop the suicide bombings, which have killed hundreds of Israelis and which have made extreme security measures – such as the defensive fence and convoluted bypass – roads necessary? Any of these would create a climate of peace and would indeed be the "confidence-building gestures" that the world hopes for.

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The Old Girl, Still Kickin'

Atlas Shrugged, Ayn Rand's massive ideological novel, turns 50

TERRY TEACHOUT

As I write these words, the 146th best-selling book on Amazon.com is the trade-paperback edition of a 1,200-page-long, 50-year-old mystery novel about a physicist, two industrialists, and a South American playboy with four (count 'em, four) middle names. Though the novel in question contains a fair amount of sex, its centerpiece is a 56-page monologue about the modern-day implications of Aristotelian philosophy. The author, a squat, vain Russian émigré, was so sure she'd penned a masterpiece that she refused to let anyone change a line of it, and so stubborn that she managed to impose her will on her publisher, who readily admitted to finding her philosophy "absolutely horrifying." Be that as it may, Random House's Bennett Cerf had been in the book-selling game long enough to know a cash cow when he saw one, so he ordered up a first printing of 100,000 copies—and sold them all.

Cerf recalled his friendly but uneasy professional relationship with Ayn Rand in *At Random*, his genial autobiography:

I remember when *Atlas Shrugged* was being edited by Hiram Haydn. The hero, John Galt, makes a speech that lasts about thirty-eight pages [*sic!*]. All that he says in it has been said over and over already in the book, but Hiram couldn't get her to cut a word. . . . I said, "Ayn, nobody's going to read that. You've said it all three or four times before, and it's thirty-odd pages long. You've got to cut it." She looked at me calmly and said, "Would you cut the Bible?" So I gave up.

Cerf dictated that anecdote to an oral historian in 1968. I read *Atlas Shrugged* four years later. I was 16, and it made a deep impression on me, as it does on most impressionable teenagers. Ten years after that, I wrote an essay called "Farewell, Dagny Taggart" (the title refers to Rand's businesswoman-heroine) that was published in *NATIONAL REVIEW* on the 25th anniversary of the book's publication. It was the second piece I'd written for the magazine—for any magazine, if truth be told. In it I told how reading *Atlas Shrugged*, for all its glaring flaws, had jolted me out of a good many ill-considered assumptions about the way the world works. I then went on to seek out a more thoughtful philosophy, and in short order stumbled across my first copy of

Mr. Teachout, the drama critic of the *Wall Street Journal* and the music critic of *Commentary*, blogs about the arts at www.TerryTeachout.com. He is writing a biography of Louis Armstrong.

NR, from which all else, including my writing career, was to follow.

Might such classics of 20th-century conservative thought as *The Road to Serfdom* or *The Conservative Mind* (both of which I read a couple of years later) have had a similar effect on me had either book been available, as *Atlas Shrugged* was, in the high-school library of the small Missouri town in which I grew up? Very likely not—and that was my point. For the great virtue of *Atlas Shrugged*, as I saw in 1982, is that it is so well suited to the needs of the "frustrated adolescent in search of fresh ideas" that I had been a decade earlier: "It seems likely that most people who read it are 16-year-olds (of various ages) who find themselves carried away by the sheer mind-clearing exhilaration of unrestrained adolescent individualism; and I know a sizable number of readers, myself included, who have gone on from there to the infinitely greener pastures of true conservatism."

'BIG SISTER'

To give Rand even that much credit in the pages of NR was a significant concession, for she had long since been read out of the conservative movement by none other than Whittaker Chambers. The author of *Witness* was very much a living memory at NR in 1982, though he had died two decades before and the dozen-odd pieces he had written during his two-year tenure as a senior editor remained uncollected. But "Big Sister Is Watching You," his 1957 review of *Atlas Shrugged*, was still being talked about, and while few conservatives of my generation had actually read the essay—it was not until 1989 that I edited *Ghosts on the Roof*, the collection of Chambers's magazine journalism in which it first appeared in book form—the general feeling was that it had settled Rand's hash once and for all.

It was Chambers more than anyone else who persuaded Eisenhower-era conservatives that to make common cause with Ayn Rand, however tempting, would be a grave mistake. Because of the rip-roaring popular success of *The Fountainhead*, her name was already fairly well known to the general public in 1957, and it would have been understandable had the editors of NR opted to ride on the coattails of an author whose last book had been made into a big-budget Hollywood movie. But the still-nascent conservative movement was then disreputable to a degree now unthinkable outside the groves of academe and the New York Times Building, and it was important to Bill Buckley and his colleagues that their enterprise be purged of extremists who might lead it into even hotter water.

Enter NR's senior ex-Communist, who not only knew extremism when he saw it but was a card-carrying aesthete to boot, meaning that he was as alert to the literary weaknesses of *Atlas Shrugged* as he was to its intellectual deficiencies:

Atlas Shrugged can be called a novel only by devaluing the term. It is a massive tract for the times. Its story merely serves Miss Rand to get the customers inside the tent, and as a soapbox for delivering her Message. . . . It is the more persuasive, in some quarters, because the author deals wholly in the blackest blacks and the whitest whites. In this fiction everything, everybody, is either all good or all bad, without any of those intermediate shades which, in life, complicate reality and perplex the eye that seeks to probe it truly.

As for the Message, Chambers wasn't having any of it. He saw at once that Rand's Objectivism was "a forthright philosophic materialism. . . . Randian Man, like Marxian Man, is made the center of a godless world." Having sloughed off one ideology, he had no intention of swallowing its inversion. In the most quoted

Rand in later years, he yoked her with the crazies of the John Birch Society, whose zany brand of anti-Communism had appealed to certain of NR's less stable contributors. They, too, were pushed over the side in due course, and by 1982 it was taken for granted that the expulsion of such folk from the

'From almost any page of *Atlas Shrugged*, a voice can be heard, from painful necessity, commanding: "To a gas chamber—go!"

passage of "Big Sister Is Watching You," Chambers argued that Rand's individualism was as totalitarian in its implications as the Soviet-style Marxism from which she had fled:

Dissent from revelation so final (because, the author would say, so reasonable) can only be willfully wicked. There are ways of dealing with such wickedness, and, in fact, right reason itself enjoins them. From almost any page of *Atlas Shrugged*, a voice can be heard, from painful necessity, commanding: "To a gas chamber—go!"

Case closed—or so it seemed. When Buckley wrote about

precincts of true conservatism had been a sad but inescapably necessary piece of intellectual hygiene.

But Rand, unlike the Birchers, didn't go away. *Atlas Shrugged* kept on selling, and does so to this day. A Freestar Media/Zogby poll this year determined that 8.1 percent of Americans had read it, and another poll conducted in 1991 by the Library of Congress and the Book-of-the-Month Club found that it was the second most frequently cited book that had "made a difference" in people's lives, behind the Bible but ahead of *The Road Less Traveled*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. In



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September, *Variety* reported that a film version directed by Vadim Perelman and starring Angelina Jolie (eeuuww!) as Dagny Taggart is expected to go into production early next year. And while sell-all-the-lighthouses libertarian extremism is no more popular today than it was in 1982, small-L libertarianism has now attained a measure of cultural and intellectual respectability not far removed from that won by NR-style conservatism a quarter-century ago. Michael Kinsley recently published an essay in *Time* magazine called “Libertarians Rising,” in which he argued that libertarianism is “going to be an increasingly powerful force in politics.” No doubt David Broder will shortly come to the same conclusion.

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK HAVE?

I come not to bury libertarianism—my shovel isn’t big enough—and in any case my guess is that it will continue to coexist awkwardly but more or less peaceably with conservatism, since the two philosophies, for all their differences, still have enough common enemies to make frequent common cause possible. What I find more interesting is that despite (or because of) its literary and intellectual inadequacies, *Atlas Shrugged* continues to be read and to have an impact on its readers, not all of whom are pimply teenagers. The list of influential figures who admit to having been swayed by it includes such heavy hitters as Alan Greenspan and Clarence Thomas. John Stossel, whose appearances on ABC’s *20/20* have made him one of the most widely known right-of-center journalists in America, recently declared that *Atlas Shrugged* had played a major part in effecting his conversion to libertarianism.

One word: Why?

In 1982 I found it sufficient merely to say that “Ayn Rand’s novels have had some kind of effect on their more intelligent readers out of all proportion to their (minimal) inherent good sense.” The implication, if memory serves, was that this effect could be expected to diminish as full-fledged conservatism sank ever-deeper roots in the American body politic, and that Rand and her books would come in time to be viewed as historical curiosities. No such luck. *Atlas Shrugged* is 50, a year younger than me, and both of us, amazingly enough, are still here and still prospering.

To celebrate our mutual survival, I reread “Farewell, Dagny Taggart” the other day and *Atlas Shrugged* immediately afterward. It had been a decade since I’d last revisited the tale of John Galt’s triumph over the forces of collectivism, venality, and general wussiness, and even longer since I’d laid eyes on any of my early pieces for NR. Hence I was both surprised and relieved to find that “Farewell, Dagny Taggart” wasn’t nearly as jejune as I’d remembered. Still, it never quite gets around to answering the question I posed in the last paragraph: “Just what

is it about *Atlas Shrugged* that appeals to otherwise intelligent people?”

Bennett Cerf came closer than anyone else to answering this question when he said in 1968 that Rand “tells a hell of a story.” Why are America’s brightest minds vanishing one by one? Where are they going? And who is John Galt? If the first chapter of *Atlas Shrugged* doesn’t make you long to know the answers to these questions, then you’re not the sort of person for whom blockbuster novels are written.

All of which is a roundabout way of saying that Chambers was wrong about one thing: Rand really was a kind of artist. As she said in a 1946 notebook entry:

I seem to be both a theoretical philosopher and a fiction writer. But it is the last that interests me most; the first is only the means to the last . . . This is why, I think, the idea of writing a philosophical non-fiction book bored me. In such a book, the purpose would actually be to teach others, to present my idea to them. In a book of fiction the purpose is to create, for myself, the kind of world I want and to live in it while I am creating it; then, as a secondary consequence, to let others enjoy this world, if, and to the extent that, they can.



Ayn Rand

That is the way artists talk about what they do, and for all Rand’s crudeness, *Atlas Shrugged* is in this specific sense as much a work of art as Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, the novel that influenced her more than any other. Full-fledged “philosophical novels” are about their underlying ideas, not their stories; *Atlas Shrugged*, by contrast, is first and foremost a story, which is why people not in sympathy with its underlying ideas are capable of reading it for pleasure, in the same way they might read *Pet Sematary* or *The Firm*.

As for the crudity, it’s part and parcel of the book’s appeal. Because all of the characters in *Atlas Shrugged* are

chiaroscuro-free caricatures, the reader can cheer and hiss them at will without resorting to the time-consuming necessity of wondering whether any of the good guys might actually be bad. You might as well be reading a novel by Zane Grey—except that Rand paints her bad guys with the broad brush of satire, for which she had a rudimentary but considerable gift. I’d even venture to say that some of Rand’s politicians, intellectuals, and artists look more like the real thing today than they did in 1957. I especially like Ralph Eubank, the fraudulent highbrow novelist who secretly longs to be popular:

“Culture should be taken out of the hands of the dollar-chasers. We need a national subsidy for literature. It is disgraceful that artists are treated like peddlers and that art works have to be sold like soap.”

“You mean, your complaint is that they *don’t* sell like soap?” asked Francisco d’Anconia.

Touché—and then some.

SOAP SELLS

The trouble with *Atlas Shrugged*, artistically speaking, is that it is, as Chambers said, so wholly predictable. Everybody good is very, very good, everybody bad is very, very bad, and everything that happens from first page to last is rigidly, inartfully consistent with the book's initiating premises. The ultimate expression of this consistency is Galt's Gulch, the libertarian "utopia of greed" to which all the best people have removed themselves, there to set up a society (if you can call it that) which exists in order to demonstrate that statism is evil and altruism a snare and a delusion. It is, not coincidentally, a paradise of humorless, obsessive drudges whose combination of self-love and self-absorption reminds me of Earl Long's description of Henry Luce and his magazines: "Mr. Luce is like a man that owns a shoestore and buys all the shoes to fit himself. Then he expects other people to buy them."

Yet it is this very rigidity that explains why *Atlas Shrugged* has been both so spectacularly popular and so spectacularly influential: Rand turns liberty into an ideology, then dramatizes it in the black-and-white manner of a B western. Randism, like every other ism, is a surefire guide to the perplexed that supplies insert-coin-A-in-slot-B answers to all questions, however arcane. The only difference is that *Atlas Shrugged*, unlike *Das Kapital*, also has a plot, complete with sex scenes and a shoot-'em-up finale. Small wonder that it has sold like soap for half a century.

Will it go on selling? Probably. Is that such a bad thing?

Probably not. Even Whittaker Chambers finally judged *Atlas Shrugged* to be harmless enough, comparing it to a patent medicine: "Some may like the flavor. In any case, the brew is probably without lasting ill effects. But it is not a cure for anything." That seems to me about right—but not quite. Not only did my 16-year-old self quaff Dr. Rand's Miracle Elixir without any lasting ill effects, but he actually grew up to be a healthy, sensible adult who knows that you don't have to sell *all* the lighthouses to have a proper respect for the virtues of free minds and free markets. And therein lies the paradoxical virtue of philosophical extremism: Sometimes it can help you figure out what you really think. As the libertarian blogger Megan McArdle recently observed, "Models and thought experiments are designed to illuminate principles, not mirror the real world. We already have something that looks and works exactly like the actual world: that is, the world. However, if you want to learn much about that world beyond 'Water is wet' and 'Fire burns,' you need to simplify in order to see deep truths more clearly."

I'm not so sure that Ayn Rand grasped that crucial distinction, any more than she understood how to write a serious novel. My guess is that she saw Galt's Gulch as a design for living, not a thought experiment. Yet even so, it still taught me something simple but valuable about the real world, and for this knowledge, on the golden anniversary of the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*, I offer renewed thanks.

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the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Breakdown

WHEN the host of a comedy show has a crying jag on camera and then cancels her next two shows because her disconsolate woe just keeps getting worse, we can't help wondering, Where can a funny lady go from here? The answer is: She can't. It's checkmate time for Ellen DeGeneres.

Picture it. She stands sobbing now on the chessboard, her tragic life smashed to kibbles 'n' bits, looking for someplace, anyplace, to move. But she is surrounded by unkindred spirits.

To her right waits an unforgiving bishop, Nobelist littérateur Henri Bergson, who wrote, "Laughter has no greater foe than emotion." Nope, she can't move there.

Maybe, she thought, she should try somebody less powerful, but the deadly little pawn on her left is Dorothy Parker, who said, "Wit is the humor of the indifferent," so she certainly can't move there.

What to do? There must be somebody who agrees with her that it's only natural to have syndicated hysterics when you've been accused of dognapping and breaking the hearts of innocent children, but the queen of the *African Queen* is unmoved, saying only: "Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above."

There remains that sturdy working-man of the chessboard, the rook, but he turns out to be the most implacable adversary of all because he is that great moral philosopher, Anonymous, who said, "The show must go on." Before Ellen can finish saying "But I'm a caring individual" he tells her about two entertainers who regarded the performing arts as a noble calling and gave new meaning to courage and dignity.

One was Ziegfeld Follies dancer Marilyn Miller, whose signature song

was "Look for the Silver Lining," who went onstage moments after getting word that her husband had been killed in an auto wreck, giving a flawless performance with no hint that anything was wrong.

The other was, like Ellen, a comedian. A few hours before his 1940s radio show, *Abbott & Costello*, was due to start, Lou Costello learned that his son had drowned. No one canceled; instead, the news was withheld and Costello went on the air. That night's show was no different from all the others—the same ding-dong hot timing, the same consistent, exquisitely calibrated balance between the two very different personalities, straight man and fall guy, that had inspired a critic to call their "Who's on First?" routine "a work of art." It was an apt description because comedians are like painters or composers; one wrong stroke, one wrong note, and the whole structure falls apart.

But the comedic structure held. The next day when the papers reported what had happened, the country heaped praise on Costello for his self-control and dedication. Editorials overflowed with sympathetic admiration, portraying him as a heroic Pagliaccio "laughing on the outside, crying on the inside," and crowned him with two laurel words. One was the old vaudeville compliment, *trouser*, which is no longer part of the language. The other was something we wouldn't dare call anybody nowadays: *a thoroughbred*.

Now we have Mutts & Moms, the adoption agency for quadrupets once favored by our lesbiancholy baby, a beset hairdresser, the hairdresser's traumatized daughters screaming in psychic pain, two cats who are mad as hell and no doubt plotting Garfieldish retaliation, death threats left on answering machines, and a lawyered-up Brussels Griffon mix named Iggy, the dog that launched a thousand hits in Blogsville.

I can think of three reasons why Ellen's lachrymose meltdown may be

the best thing that has happened to us in a long time.

First, she has made us see the error of our progressive ways. From her stunned and obviously embarrassed studio audience to commentators of every political stripe, the reaction to her unprofessional behavior has been almost unanimously one of mockery and contempt, undergirded with frustrated anger as people dimly realize what it says about social trends in the last few decades, when the whole country set out to shed its inhibitions under the rubric of "getting in touch with your feelings." We thought we could pick and choose only nice feelings to get in touch with, but now we have seen enough to know that there is no fundamental difference between Ellen's failure to practice self-control and the violent criminal whose

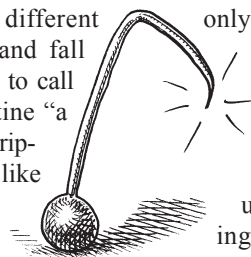
only excuse is "I snapped" or "I lost it." Inhibitions are inhibitions; if you shed one, you end up shedding them all.

Second, she has reminded us that public displays of feeling are low-class. Some small part of us, not yet gutted by democracy, longs to wrestle our emotions to the mat and get in touch instead with self-sufficiency. The Self-Help genre calls it "taking control of your life" and Hemingway called it "grace under pressure," but it actually is the old aristocratic principle of maintaining an unruffled and imperturbable style in the face of life's setbacks. It's too much to hope that people will stop crying on television entirely, but I suspect we will get a vacation from it.

I hesitate to mention my third assessment for fear of jinxing it, but it's just possible that Ellen's breakdown will help defeat Hillary. Whenever a high-profile female pulls a just-like-a-woman stunt, people are bound to think, "Suppose . . ." This particular stunt is ideal for our purpose: A tempest in a teapot gets more and more complicated because everybody offers endless explanations about why things are getting worse and worse.

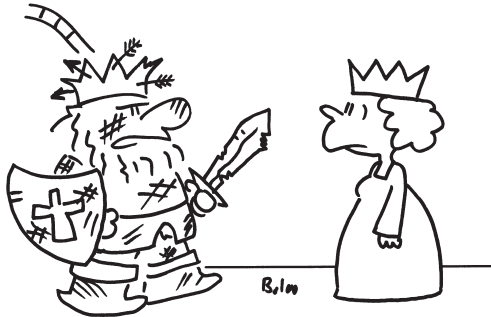
This is escalation, which means foreign policy, which means visions of Hillary doing the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein.

NR



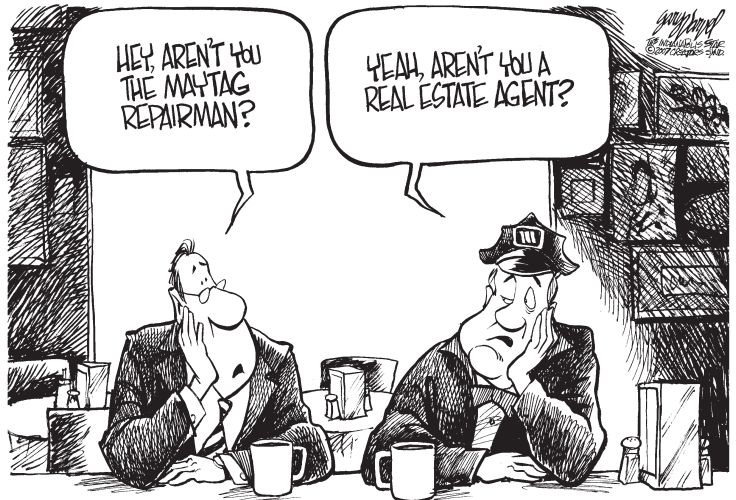
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HELLO!!!



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the long view

ROB LONG

Dear Rusty,

Wow! It's been a long time!

You know, we haven't corresponded as much in the past few years as we used to. My fault, I'm sure. I just don't have the time like I used to, back when I was vice president of the United States. Back then, I could easily grab a few minutes each day and write a letter (snail mail, too! ☺) to my old friend Rusty.

But, you know how it is: You run for president and that turns into a whole big thing, and then you make a hit movie and host a big rock concert and then you win the Nobel Peace Prize, and suddenly it's like your time is not your own. It's the old story.

So, hey, apologies for the delay in writing you back after your last letter. In the move from D.C. and all of the craziness of the past few years, I've been meaning to get to it and meaning to get to it, and today, finally, I minimized all of the screens in my office, set the BlackBerry to "vibrate," reread your letter of 1/22/01 to kind of refresh my memory—luckily it was a super-short letter!—and sat down to write this reply.

In the first place, although I hope you're still in the Brazilian rainforest doing that important work, I've got to be honest with you: Up here, we've all sort of moved beyond the whole narrow rainforest focus of the late 1990s. That was a different time, Rusty, and in many ways a more innocent time, when all we worried about was some rubber plants and a couple of rare fish. Obviously, it's an important issue

and we're all passionately committed to stopping deforestation and the other bad stuff that's going on down there (send me a link to that info when you get a chance, won't you?), but these days we're sort of concentrating on electric cars and polar ice caps (or the lack of them! LOL!), so when I reread your letter, it was Time Machine City, if you know what I mean. Please find enclosed a DVD of my movie, which should bring you up to date on what we're all about these days. Basically, less rainforest stuff, more killer hurricanes and floods.

And for the record, although I know you didn't ask in your letter, I'm not going to run for president again. I really feel I can be more effective as an advocate for change by not jumping into that fray again. I say, let Hillary take it.

Um, how behind the times are you? I know you don't have much media access down there on the banks of the Orinoco—but you know about Hillary, right? She's running, and it looks like she might actually win the presidency. I can send you some clippings, if you like.

Also: Rereading your letter—and, again, I'm so sorry it's taken me six years to get back to you—I'm not really sure what "send help" means. Do you mean "help" as in manpower? Because so many of the young people these days are into war stuff and sustainability stuff and alternative-fuels stuff, so I'm certainly willing to

post something on the blogs, but I wouldn't hold my breath. Or do you mean "help" as in financial help? Because, and again, I hate to be the bad guy here, but I've sort of rearranged my 501(c)(3) arrangements in the past few years. My suggestion to you, if you're looking for donations, is to post something on your Facebook page that links to a YouTube video which people can send around or post on their blogs, like a widget, and PayPal you a donation.

Does any of this make sense to you? I know you've been down there a long, long time—I think you started your work in 1993, right?—so some of this stuff may be a total mystery.

It might be worth your while, if you can manage it, to put some of your work down there on hold for a bit, catch a flight to the States, and sort of "catch up" on stuff. Learn about the web. Listen to some of the new music. Get into the "climate change thang"

and maybe take off your "rainforest only" blinders. Just a suggestion. Tipper and I would love to host you for a while. I say "would" because we're working on the house, and we're in pretty tight quarters as it is.

Anyway, I guess I've rambled on for too long. I promise not to wait another six years between letters!

One last question: What did you mean in your letter by "v. sick, send med. + food?"

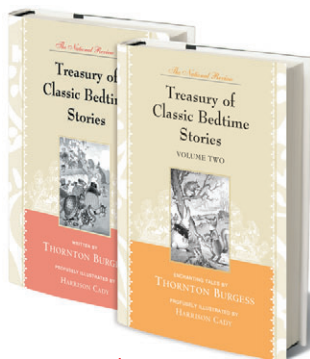
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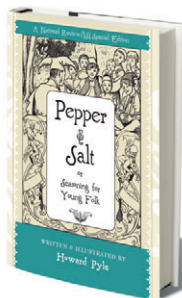
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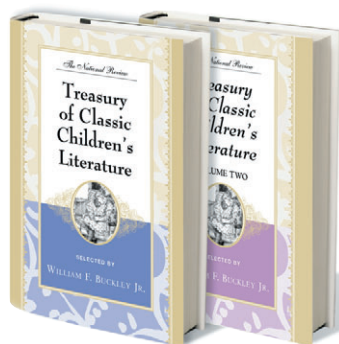
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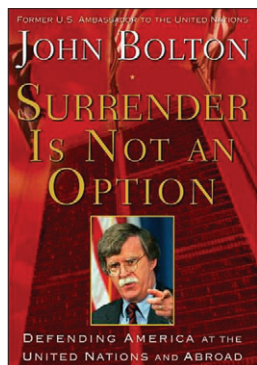
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Agnew's Intern (and Almost Ours)



*Surrender Is Not an Option:
Defending America at the United
Nations and Abroad*, by John Bolton
(Threshold, 486 pp., \$27)

JAY NORDLINGER

JOHN BOLTON left his post as U.S. ambassador to the U.N. at the end of last year. What's he been doing since? Writing his book—a big, fat, engrossing thing. Bolton is not only an alacritous lawyer and foreign-policymaker; he's a speedy writer.

The title of his book is “Surrender Is Not an Option”—which reminded me, slightly, of an arresting, haunting title from the 1980s: “Survival Is Not Enough.” That was Richard Pipes’s book on Soviet grand strategy, and what to do about it. Of course, surrender *is* an option; Americans have chosen it before (e.g., April 1975). But it’s an option that John Bolton doesn’t think very much of.

His opening chapter, “Early Days,” gives us the making of a conservative—a feisty, scrappy, brainy conservative. Young John got permission to be absent from high school on Election Day 1964—

to pass out leaflets for Goldwater. When his man—our man—lost, he was sorely disappointed. Even more, he was outraged at the treatment Goldwater had received from the media, academic elites, and so on. His instinct? “Fight back.”

He was the son of a Baltimore firefighter, Jack, and his wife, Ginny. Neither had graduated from high school. But they busted themselves for John, and he went to Yale College. On that rarefied campus, he was a “libertarian conservative,” as he says, and therefore—to the community at large—“a space alien.” This was the age of “student strikes,” when you were expected to cut class in protest of this or that. Bolton would have none of it. For one thing, he was on scholarship, and here were these rich kids demanding that he, in effect, forfeit it. “I had an education to get, and the protesters could damn well get out of my way as I walked to class.”

After Yale College, Bolton went to Yale Law School—where his classmates included Clarence Thomas, Bill Clinton, and Hillary Rodham. He came under the wing of such luminaries as Robert Bork, Alexander Bickel, and Ralph Winter. One summer, he had three job offers: to intern at the White House for Vice President Agnew; to be a research assistant for Bickel; or to intern for NATIONAL REVIEW. He chose Agnew, which was his punishment for snubbing NR. (Bolton admires Agnew, qualifiedly, and does not regret his decision.)

Graduation brought work at Covington & Burling, and a very big case: *Buckley v. Valeo*. Under lead counsel Winter, Bolton worked on the Buckley side. Four years later, when Reagan was elected, Bolton went in—into government. He was first at the Agency for International Development, then at the Justice Department. At Justice, one of his jobs was to smooth judicial nominations. In 1987, a Supreme Court seat became available, and Reagan nominated Bork—“the nation’s finest legal analyst,” says Bolton. To read about his rejection, and the manner of it, is to burn all over again.

The presidency of Bush the Elder took Bolton to the State Department, under Jim Baker. He is a wily, savvy, fascinating

character, James A. Baker III. Bolton learned a thing or two from him. During these years at State, Bolton was instrumental in getting a notorious U.N. resolution repealed: That was the “Zionism is racism” resolution. Unfortunately, says Bolton, the spirit of that revolution lived on. And “deep-seated” anti-Israel bias at the U.N. would occupy “a considerable amount of time and effort” during his tenure at Turtle Bay.

Bolton has a particularly keen understanding of Israel and the Middle East, and an unusual sympathy. Like Paul Johnson and a few others, he is a present-day Righteous Gentile.

In the Clinton years, he says, he “wandered the political wilderness.” But he still made himself useful—for example, at the American Enterprise Institute (to which he has returned post-U.N.). And when the 2000 election hung in the balance, Bolton was in Florida, lawyering like mad. Later on, Donald Rumsfeld would refer to him as “Mr. Hanging Chad.”

When Bush the Younger was inaugurated, Bolton went again to the State Department, under Colin Powell. The Senate confirmed him as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security affairs. At a reception, Bush said to him, “The fact you were confirmed proves there’s justice in the world.” In this job, Bolton helped extricate the U.S. from the ABM Treaty—a forgotten piece of wisdom and courage. He also pushed for a saner North Korea policy. After he gave a candid speech in Seoul, the North called him the “envoy of evil”—which pleased Bolton enormously.

Throughout the book, the author gives a thorough picture of the State Department and its bureaucracy. A chilling picture it is, too: In the last many years, State has sometimes seemed dedicated to tripping up the foreign policy of the president—“the guy who got elected,” in Jim Baker’s words. How can such a situation be permitted, and what can be done about it? Rumsfeld once said to Bolton, “I don’t know how you survive over there!” But Bolton survived and made inroads. The president was heard to say that Bolton was the only guy in the building he could trust completely.

And what about the secretary, Powell? Bolton paints a mixed and interesting

picture: Sometimes Powell is sharp, realistic—even hawkish; other times, he is dreamy, unrealistic, State-ish. His Achilles' heel seems to be two-fold: an overfondness for process—for mere process—and an overfondness for popularity. Needless to say, Bolton does not share those overfondnesses, especially the latter (which is partly responsible for his popularity among some of us).

At the beginning of his second term, Bush did something nervy: He asked Bolton to be ambassador to the U.N. The Democrats refused to confirm him, helped by a couple of “weak-kneed Republicans who flutter in the heart.” (Those words were Al Haig’s, spoken to Bolton.) Then, Bush did another nervy thing: He gave Bolton a recess appointment. When he did so, he said to him, “You’re going to have a big, bright target on your back in New York, even bigger than it has been. I know you know what you need to do, but just be aware that some liberal bureaucrat with a grudge is going to be looking for a chance to make

trouble.” Was that the most unnecessary advice in history?

Clearly, Bush reveled in his ambassador’s performance at the U.N. Meeting Kofi Annan, the secretary-general, he said, “How’s Bolton doing? Has he blown the place up yet?” Meeting him on a later occasion, he said, “Has Bolton been a demon up there?” Bolton affords us many glimpses of Bush. Here is merely one of them: Riding in his limo to the U.N., the president waved at Falun Gong protesters.

As time wore on, Bolton grew concerned about Bush, as about Secretary Condoleezza Rice: Had they been worn down—or taken in—by State Department careerists, particularly on North Korea and Iran?

During his 16 months at Turtle Bay, Bolton was something unusual: an ambassador *from* the United States *to* the United Nations, not an ambassador from the United Nations to the United States. The U.N. was not his client. He had a peculiar view of diplomacy: He thought

of it as advocacy for one’s country. And he was loath to see America a “well-bred doormat.” Moreover, he delighted in flouting the U.N.’s pieties. He cites Bill Buckley’s take on a U.N. rule, or attitude: “No jokes in church.” Bolton told many of them.

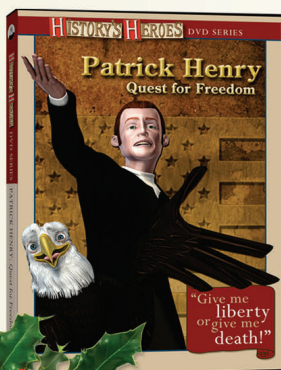
And, in this book, he is marvelously entertaining—as well as instructive—about a cast of U.N. characters. The British ambassador, Emyr Jones Parry, really comes in for it. An example: “Watching Jones Parry in action, I often wondered how Britain had acquired an empire, although he proved why they had lost America.” And, one day, General Assembly president Jan Eliasson was lecturing Bolton about U.S. public opinion on the United Nations. Our ambassador recommended that he start reading NATIONAL REVIEW.

As you might guess, Bolton had loads of fun in this job, dead-serious as the work was (Darfur, Iran, North Korea). He was a happy warrior; and he correctly identifies the U.N. as a “target-rich environment.”



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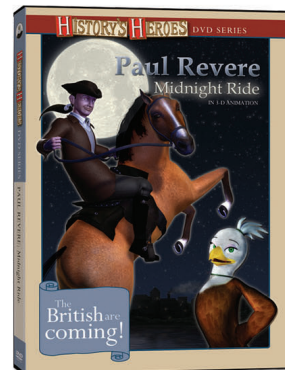


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Recalling a kind of tantrum thrown by the Venezuelan ambassador, Bolton writes, "Lord, this was fun!" And Bush—a kindred spirit—asked him, "Are you having fun?"

But the fun didn't last beyond December 2006. Bolton's recess appointment was expiring, and Senate confirmation, once more, looked very difficult. In addition, the ambassador was dismayed at the direction of U.S. policy—our stance toward North Korea and Iran looked increasingly Clinton-like. Time to leave. And time to write *Surrender Is Not an Option*.

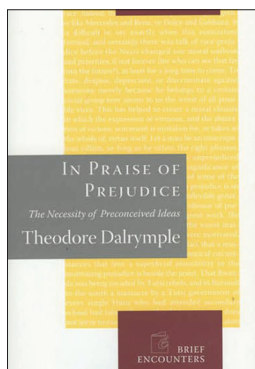
What is it? It's an autobiography, a chronicle of recent world history, a dissection of government, a portrait of the George W. Bush administration, a foreign-policy treatise, or series of them. For the past many years, Bolton must have taken copious and near-constant notes—the book is extremely detailed. Too detailed? For some, yes. But for those interested in these topics, it will be pure candy. As a writer, Bolton is direct, concise—often entertaining, as I've said. He sprinkles his book with epigraphs, splendidly chosen. For example, we get this, from de Gaulle: "Treaties, you see, are like girls and roses: They last while they last."

He is also a teller, by which I mean—he tells things. Especially interesting is what one prominent person says about another. Colin Powell: "I can't figure Condi out anymore. She's always positioning herself." Tim Wirth told Bolton to watch what he said to Richard Holbrooke, for it would surely wind up in the press. Listening to speeches at the U.N., Rice passed a note to Bolton: "Syria is all muscle and no brain."

Bolton and this magazine are friends, and you would expect a positive review in these pages. Accordingly, you have one. But there is much, much to be positive about, and all readers, of every stripe, are invited to see for themselves. Bolton is a formidable, consequential public servant. He's a thinker and a doer; a conservative and an adventurer; both *enfant terrible* and *éminence grise*. Many of us are eager to see what he'll do next—though Senate confirmation is always a dicey proposition. It would be nice to have a better Senate.

NR

Move in a Groove



*In Praise of Prejudice:
The Necessity of Preconceived Ideas,*
by Theodore Dalrymple
(Encounter, 200 pp., \$20)

HADLEY ARKES

THEODORE DALRYMPLE (aka Anthony Daniels) has graced the pages of many journals, including this one, with essays urbane and sage, on matters literary and moral. He has drawn on a remarkable range of experience as a doctor working in prisons

Mr. Arkes is the Ney professor of jurisprudence at Amherst College.

in England; he has treated the urban poor as well as patients in Africa.

He brings to these essays a finely honed literary craft, and an eye that can readily spot the moral shifts reflected in the smallest gestures. He recalls people "dropping in" on a funeral as they would on a supermarket, dressed as they would be for a bout of shopping. Dalrymple, for his part, follows the immemorial practice of wearing a dark suit: The person following the pattern of "convention" moves in a groove that cues him to respect the occasion, by reminding him—as he chooses his clothing—of its somber nature.

Modern liberalism, springing from the wit of John Stuart Mill, has exhorted people not to drift unthinkingly in the grooves of convention, but to think anew for themselves. And yet, those long-settled conventions have often sprung from the most serious reflection, and from the experience accumulated over generations. The man on the street, guided by those conventions, may be guided by moral sensibilities far more refined and reflective than his own. Convention, then, offers solid practical guidance in new situations. This is the understanding Dalrymple seems to draw upon in this collection of short essays that add up, really, to a longer essay.

His sense of the matter might have been caught by Burke in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the

EVE

(Gen 3:23)

They walk to the very edge of paradise,
having already betrayed their loving Lord,
ashamed, yet willing to pay whatever the price.
They pass the Cherubim, the flaming sword,
then see the lovely world beneath their feet.
It's beautiful. But Eve knows in her heart
the sun's burning too bright in a world replete
with thorns and sweat, thistles, and dust-thou-art.
This is the battlefield, the fallen place
where Satan and his legions lie within,
in wait, with death, with every other disgrace,
within a world now inundate with sin.
Standing with Adam, in the burning sun,
she whispers, softly, "What have we done?"

—WILLIAM BAER

man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature." Burke writes here of "just prejudice," a prejudice animated by just motives toward rightful ends. I suppose that the prejudice that Dalrymple commends would not be commendable if it did not have the same moral substance; but that is a matter not raised in this book to the level of an explicit teaching.

Dalrymple's quarrel is with the attack on "prejudice" in our own time by the forces of political correctness. There is the attack on racial prejudice and all those invidious forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and "sexual orientation." But of course this stance cannot be anything but a distinctly moral stance, and if we condemn the intolerant and the prejudiced, we clearly will not tolerate the intolerant. As Dalrymple says, there is an emphatic "prejudice against prejudice." What he seeks to recover is the sense of that discrimination that is pervasive in the life of moral agents: the persistent need—and inclination—to discriminate between the higher and the lower, the better and the worse, the just and the unjust, the refined and the vulgar.

The main villain in shaping the modern sensibility he finds in Mill, who told his readers to liberate themselves from convention and from the authorities that would instruct them on the governing of their lives. But Mill himself never thought that the pleasures of the yahoo were on the same plane as the pleasures of the literate. As he famously insisted, the pleasures of Socrates were higher than the pleasures of the pig; the pleasures of moral understanding were higher, better than, the pleasures of mere sensation. Mill opposed the schemes of reformers to provide medical care to prostitutes, for that would encourage them in a life of vice by removing its hazards. And in that memorable line in *Considerations on Representative Government*, he remarked that "no one but a fool, and only a fool of a peculiar description, feels offended by the acknowledgment that there are others whose opinion, and even whose wish, is entitled to a greater amount of consideration than his."

But the refinements of Mill were lost to the larger public. His more lasting effect was to foster the conceit that people had a

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certain right to their own opinion, no matter how uninstructed, and that all opinions stood on the same plane. Dalrymple recalls an incident with Jonathan Ross, a BBC interviewer who was paid an outsized salary for outsized provocations. Ross once asked the leader of the Conservative party whether, as a youth, he had masturbated while thinking of Margaret Thatcher. When his question stirred a wave of protest, he thought it a sufficient answer to remark that he thought the question “a valid one.” By what measure of propriety or relevance? Evidently his own, measured by no other standard.

In this state of mind, Dalrymple finds the corrosion of understanding. For there is no recognition of standards of judgment beyond our own inclinations, no openness to authority, no particular interest in considering first what the tradition of learning has to teach on any subject. Dalrymple recalls, in this vein, a conversation with a young woman, a social worker, on a flight to Dublin. She remarked on her recoil from the Catholic Church, and her rejection then of all forms of authority. “All forms?” asked Dalrymple. “So you don’t mind,” he went on, “if I now go to the cockpit of this aircraft and take over the controls.” She protested that there was a difference, for the authority of the pilot was based on experience and proper certification. “And who,” asked Dalrymple, “certified his knowledge and experience?” At some point, we find ourselves trusting that no airline would stay in business if it did not have reliable, authoritative means of testing and judging the competence of pilots. In the same way we find ourselves trusting the authority of engineers when we turn on the ignition in our cars—as we trust the authorities built up and confirmed in the past when we profess our certainty that Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

At every turn, authority is inescapable, and one lives at every turn with a prejudice to trust in the presence of those authorities in the matters touching our lives. And yet, as Dalrymple recognizes, many of these “authorities” have proven laughably unwarranted. A roster of worldly people with advanced degrees have taken seriously, in the past, the claims of phrenology, and still others have clung to astrology. From the

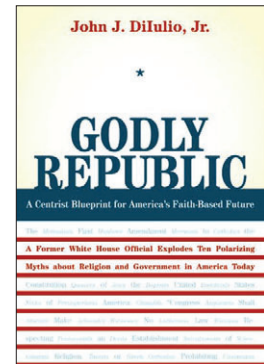
middle of the 19th century well into the 20th, racists in different accents credited the social “science” of anthropology as it confirmed the ranks of superior and inferior races.

Dalrymple clearly does not bring under his pleas for prejudice the prejudice that stirred people to the pastime of lynching. It must make the most profound difference for him that the authority that claims our belief is one that is finally justified by its soundness, its rightness. And, in moral leanings, it must be critical for him that the disposition be governed, as Burke said, by a “just prejudice.”

But then the plea here cannot really be for “prejudice.” The claims of prejudice must hinge on the soundness of the understanding that lies behind them. And that soundness must be reckoned finally by reason—by those demanding tests of proof and validity governed, as ever, by the canons of reason. Yet, that is not exactly what Dalrymple offers as the key. He recalls one inmate of a prison who did not seem to recognize that he was obliged to offer care and protection to the children he had brought into the world. Without that recognition, that obligation seems to spring only from “social pressure” and a prejudice long settled. Dalrymple regards the obligation here as resting on “indisputable standards.” But the social pressure, he is certain, does not arise from many people over the years “having thought and reasoned about the matter from first principles.” True enough, but where do those “indisputable standards” find the ground of their own rightness? If not in reason, then in revelation? But Dalrymple has made it clear that he is not religious. And even so, the notion of revelation must presuppose creatures who are capable of receiving revelation—creatures who have enough wit to sense the difference between claims of revelation that are plausible and ones that are spurious.

Dalrymple’s essays move in an engaging way, with a moral edge, through a train of illustrations, and the conversation keeps its sparkle. What is curiously missing are the reasons that finally govern the judgments and make the “prejudices” defensible. It may be the craft, though, of a seasoned writer: to impart conviction and leave us quite satisfied, while distracting us, in a stylish way, from that vexing question of just what supplies, in the end, the truth of what he is saying. **NR**

Faith and Works



*Godly Republic:
A Centrist Blueprint for
America's Faith-Based Future,*
by John J. DiIulio Jr.
(California, 329 pp., \$24.95)

RYAN T. ANDERSON

JOHN DI IULIO is an enigma. An Ivy League professor with a Ph.D. from Harvard, tenure from Princeton, and now an endowed chair at Penn, he is also a devout Roman Catholic who refers to himself as “born again” and credits black Pentecostals for his return to faith. A pro-life, pro-family social conservative, he is also a pro-poor registered Democrat who served in the highest levels of the Bush administration as our nation’s first “faith czar.”

Listening to DiIulio is always a good idea, for he is that rare breed who claims to be a political moderate and actually is. Add to these centrist sensibilities his groundbreaking research on crime, poverty, and religion and his firsthand experience with Philadelphia’s faith-based social services, and you begin to see why DiIulio draws such attention.

His new book, *Godly Republic*, confirms that the attention is deserved. It

Mr. Anderson is an assistant editor at *First Things*. A 2007 Phillips Foundation Fellow, he is the assistant director of the Program in Bioethics at the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.

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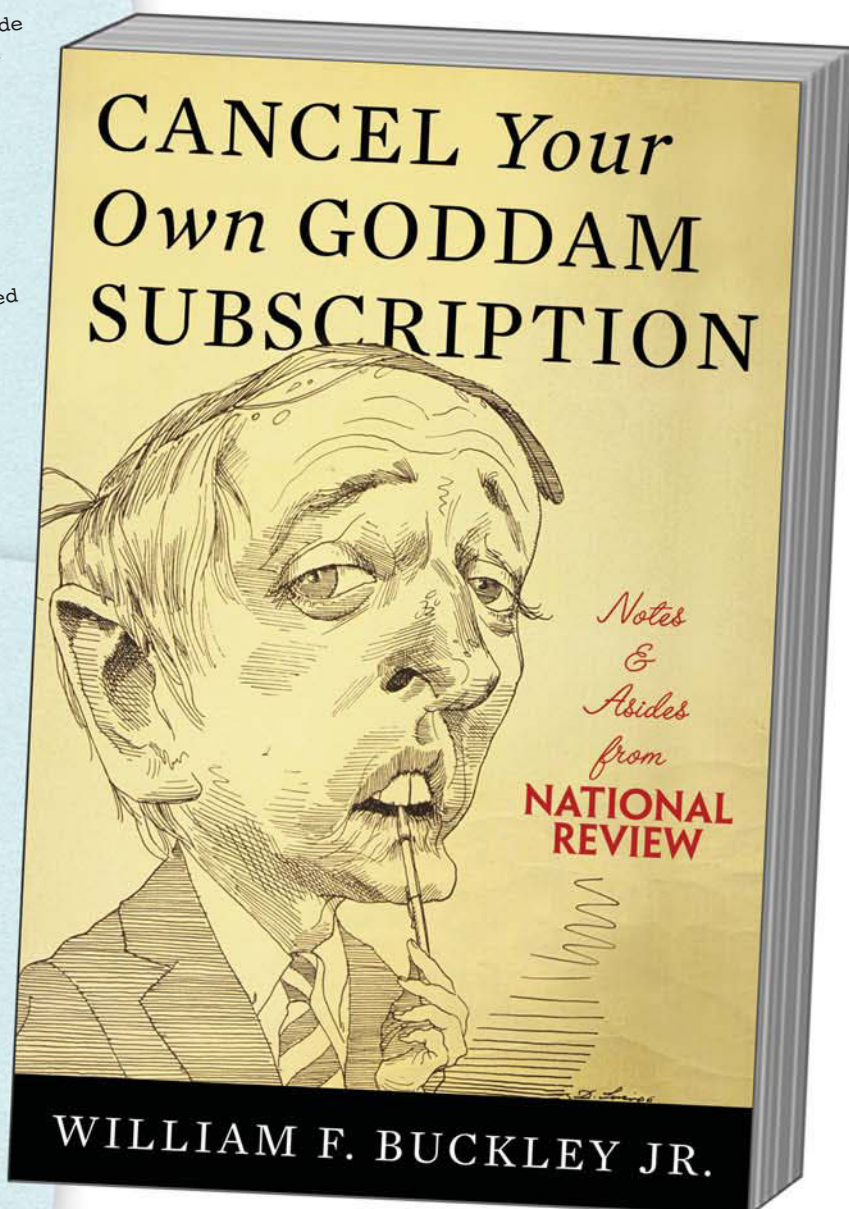
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combines social science, political theory, and American history with policy wonkery and religious altar call (or, better, soup-kitchen call). Citing statistics and the Founding Fathers with equal facility, DiIulio explains what he wanted to achieve with faith-based initiatives, why they went wrong, and how to make them work. The result is an eloquent and discerning book.

The basic problem is that poverty, crime, and failing schools haven't gone away. One in five black children lives with his family on under \$17,000 a year, one-third of all black men end up in jail, and almost half of all black teens drop out of high school. As DiIulio notes, these kids have been "failed by family members, neighbors, religious believers, fellow citizens, and government officials."

But he recognizes that more New Deal solutions aren't the answer. His solution is to stop discriminating against faith-based social-service providers. Though they may do it "for Jesus," most of these providers are "faith-based," not "faith-saturated": They serve the poor irrespective of their religious faith, use no religious test in hiring, and abide by state regulations—and thus are constitutionally eligible for federal assistance. They're also effective. As Hillary Clinton has pointed out, who is more likely to help the neediest than someone "who sees God at work in the lives of even the most hopeless and left-behind of our children"?

The idea, then, is to open government-by-proxy to all qualified providers, not just secular ones. Government money wouldn't fund sectarian worship or proselytizing, but only the vital social work that religious communities do. DiIulio notes that America's social capital is spiritual: Half of all civic institutions are religious. And one thing that religious institutions do better than any other is mobilize volunteers—yet they remain an under-funded resource that the government has (unconstitutionally) discrim-

inated against. This was supposed to end in 1996 with the welfare-reform bill, but its provisions allowing faith-based groups to receive federal monies were never truly implemented. DiIulio's job under Bush was to create a level playing field, tilted neither toward nor away from religious groups.

The Founders, especially James Madison, inspire DiIulio's work. As he sees it, according to "every valid historical source and measure," most "framers were indisputably Bible-believing Protestants." Even the Deists and agnostics among the Founders "were unfailingly faith-friendly." The agnostic Franklin, for example, "called for prayer at the Constitutional Convention and insisted that public schools teach that the Bible's God is real." But the Founders also denied that government "should favor Christians or any other religious group." According to Madison's *Federalist 51*, America was to be a place where a "multiplicity of sects" would flourish—neither a secular nor a Christian nation.

The "faithful consensus" the Founders reached, which was respected for most of our nation's history, splintered in the 20th century when "orthodox secularists" and "orthodox sectarians" tried to advance their partisan causes. But we should try to restore the Founders' consensus, because it works. In DiIulio's telling, the Supreme Court best articulated this idea in its 1971 *Lemon* decision, which set up three criteria for church-state relations: Government action must have a secular purpose, a primary effect neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, and no excessive entanglement with religion. Or, as DiIulio puts it: "government neutrality and equal protection, not strict separation or special treatment."

The public agrees. While elite America may be launching culture wars between red believers and blue secularists, the vast majority of the nation is purple, happy with government support of sacred groups that serve secular purposes. Many political leaders accept this, too. Bush and Gore campaigned on

virtually the same faith-based social-service message, and Hillary Clinton and Joe Lieberman have also been strong supporters.

But if so many people favor this equilibrium, what went wrong with the faith-based initiatives program? In a word: politics. Before the program got off the ground, orthodox secularists raised hell. At the same time, upon learning that Bush and DiIulio were planning to play within the bounds of settled constitutional law, orthodox sectarians denounced DiIulio's proposals as "Christophobic" and demanded taxpayer money for religious worship and evangelism. Republican operatives used the faith-based office merely to score political points with the base (for which DiIulio called them "Mayberry Machiavellis"), while Democrats refused to let Bush "win big through compromise." One even told DiIulio, "I don't care if [you] re-type Clinton's stuff and give Gore credit. . . . This president is getting nothing else fast, no matter what."

Yet DiIulio says that Bush never wavered in his commitment to the notion that faith-based initiatives should be non-partisan, fully constitutional, and truly effective for the poor. This remains, DiIulio insists, the winning strategy for the future. We should be neither allergic nor addicted to government, embracing instead the Catholic principle of subsidiarity: The family is the fundamental unit of society—the best department of health, education, and welfare—but it sometimes needs help. The first responders should be extended family, neighbors, the local church, and other civic groups, but government, too, plays a role.

While much of DiIulio's book is right on target, there are weaknesses. Certainly he is correct that an agency combating poverty or illiteracy shouldn't use its funds to support religious worship. But he is wrong in thinking that the *Lemon* test is entirely faithful to the Founders. Religious institutions, from their perspective, serve the common good not only in the social services they provide, but also in the spiritual goods they nurture. The best reading of the Constitution shows that the government has pledged only *neutrality* among religious traditions, not a denial of funding to any of them.

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In practice, though, government probably *should* steer clear of entanglement; the health of America's religions lies precisely in their independence from government. This is one reason religious leaders should be wary of faith-based partnerships: The more they depend on government funds, the less freedom they will enjoy to minister, even for social purposes, in the way they see fit. Consider how Boston's Catholic Charities was forced either to leave the adoption business or to violate its firm conviction that every child deserves a mother and a father. With government money comes government meddling. More fundamentally, couldn't public funding for the "secular" portions of a faith-based service ultimately water down the "sacred" portions?

And might faith-based initiatives simply create ever more entitlements, swelling an already strained welfare state while also weakening civil society? Since one of the most important checks on government is a robust, independent civic sphere, we should be concerned when private organizations sup at the teat of Uncle Sam. Furthermore, as DiIulio notes, since the 1950s the federal government has assumed responsibility for problems that were previously considered outside its purview. DiIulio thinks this is good. Many do not. For if seeing a panhandler on the sidewalk causes you to say "government should do something about that," then you already suffer from the morally corrupting consequences of the welfare state. This also applies to foundering faith-based organizations whose first response is to turn to the government, not the faithful. Wouldn't it be better if all of the vital organs of civil society that DiIulio admits best serve the poor were sustained directly by their benefactors? Might faith-based initiatives encourage the opposite? If government is responsible for fixing the poor, then I've done my part by paying my taxes—especially if they leave me with little for private donations.

I wish DiIulio had addressed these questions, but perhaps they would have required another book. Whatever the answers may be, it's clear that eliminating faith-based discrimination is a step in the right direction. For advancing this point with grace and good sense, we can thank John DiIulio. **NR**

■ APPRECIATION ■

The Power Of Barzun

M. D. AESCHLIMAN

AFTER a trip to the United States 80 years ago, the great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga commented on the naïve scientism that he saw in the intellectual life of the country: "The anti-metaphysical attitude of mind automatically includes an anti-historical one." Our greatest antidote to this increasingly brutal and vulgar tendency has been Jacques Barzun, who turns 100 in November and will be feted at Columbia University, where he was educated and which he nobly served as professor of history for over 40 years and as provost and dean of arts and sciences for 12 years.

Born near Paris in 1907, Barzun emigrated to the U.S. in 1920. He never lost touch with the French language, history, and cultural affairs, but he became a committed American citizen with a strong civic sense and involved himself with his nation's possibilities, prospects, and problems as well as those of Columbia and the American university generally, on whose affairs he has been a valuable commentator. He also took a strong interest in American K-12 public education, which he believes has declined from a unique and effective system in the 1920s to a confused and ineffective one today, largely through the vast influence of another Columbia figure, the very anti-metaphysical and anti-historical John Dewey.

One can make only the most selective mention of Barzun's books, activities, and honors over the eight decades since his graduation from Columbia in 1927. The American Presidential Medal of Freedom and the French Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, both countries' highest civilian

Mr. Aeschliman is a professor of education at Boston University, professor of English at the University of Italian Switzerland, and author of *The Restitution of Man: C. S. Lewis and the Case against Scientism*.

awards, are among the honors; the American Philosophical Society awards an annual Jacques Barzun Prize for an outstanding book on American or European cultural history. He has written or edited over 30 books. Among cultural historians of the last 150 years he must be seen in the Olympian company of the Swiss Jacob Burckhardt (who invented the genre), the Dutchman Huizinga, and the Englishmen Herbert Butterfield and Christopher Dawson.

To begin to appreciate Barzun's significance for our culture, we should examine some of his inspirations and influences: the polymath Blaise Pascal's epistemological distinction between the intuitive or integrative mind and the geometric mind; Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* (1925); and the works of two Americans, William James and the Columbia historian Carlton J. H. Hayes, who was one of Barzun's teachers. The literary critic Lionel Trilling was Barzun's longtime Columbia colleague and close friend.

It is Barzun's contention that history is fundamentally made by individuals, and that all forms of determinism are grievously mistaken and destructive. Human liberty is an absolute datum of consciousness and reality: The human person's "supreme pleasure and prerogative," he writes, "is to feel himself at once a moral being and a natural philosopher." No subjectivist, Barzun is nevertheless a root-and-branch opponent of two dominant modern intellectual extremes and errors: scientific reductionism ("what it reduces is the individual") and histrionic subjectivism, dominant in the modern arts, a kind of permanent childishness: "We are permissive, not from love of liberty, but because we lack self-control and fear restraint as such," he wrote 40 years ago. "We praise innocence because we want the license to behave like an infant." These extremes congeal into intellectual attitudes and institutional forms in the culture and the schools: the scientific worship of material procedures and objects, and the anarchic exaltation of aesthetic eccentricity and "self-expression" (what C. S. Lewis called "a world of incessant autobiography").

Gratefully indebted for initial insights to Pascal, James, Whitehead, and Hayes, Barzun has applied and developed them in a series of powerful books and civic

and educational activities. His classic *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage* (1941) has been steadily reprinted, with new prefaces. *Science: The Glorious Entertainment* (1964) extended the case against mechanism and scientism. Barzun's 1973 Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery, *The Use and Abuse of Art*, drew on an intimate, sympathetic, firsthand knowledge of the arts, especially visual and musical, in Paris and New York, since his upbringing in Paris during World War I as the son of an avant-garde poet. *Clio and the Doctors* (1974) was a witty, profound defense of the teaching, writing, and study of history against extravagant claims made at its expense by psychologists and sociologists. *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (2000) can be compared in its depth, power, importance, and felicity of expression to the greatest modern historical works, such as Guizot's *History of Civilization in Europe* (1828), Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), Samuel Eliot Morison's *Oxford History of the American People* (1965), and Paul Johnson's *Modern Times* (1983).

Though inevitably and consciously a philosophical historian, Barzun is rightly suspicious and critical of all works on "the philosophy of history"—from Marx and Hegel through Spengler and Toynbee—that deny human agency and novelty. "A trend is variable and may be reversed," he wrote in 1964, "as history, which is the graveyard of trends and the birthplace of counter-trends, amply shows." Communism is dead, though its Western historical trumpet E. J. Hobsbawm is still alive and sounding. There is no monocausality and no determinism in history: The "relentless" modern "drive to de-anthropomorphize," to "unman" the human person, Barzun writes, must be shown to be not only logically false but emotionally demoralizing and politically harmful.

In addition to his timely 1941 critique of Marxism—at the high point of Western intellectual sympathy for and collaboration with Communism—Barzun's lifelong hostility to the implicit, incessant, invalid philosophizing of Darwin and the Darwinians (increasingly explicit and vocal today) is

one of his most courageous and illuminating achievements as an intellectual historian and civic moralist. In the 1870s the German Darwinist biologist Haeckel wrote to Darwin to congratulate and praise him for having "shown man his true place in nature . . . thereby overthrowing the anthropocentric fable." Barzun's teacher Hayes, Barzun himself, his student Fritz Stern, and Richard Weikart in his recent *From Darwin to Hitler* have shown in detail how historically and morally disastrous this transgressive philosophical dehumanization was for the Western mind. Barzun quotes a 20th-century "positivistic" French jurist as writing: "Responsibility, which is the foundation of the penal code, eludes scientific analysis and is thus a source of error and confusion." Like Dostoevsky and C. S. Lewis, Barzun repeatedly argues that "learned foolishness" is the most dangerous folly of all, especially when clothed with the authoritative mantle of high science as in "the behavioral idea that mind and purpose are illusions."

Barzun's rationality is never reductive or arbitrary: "Life, which spurs desire and fills the mind, is wider than science or art or philosophy or all together. Mind encloses science, not the other way around." Yet the radical voluntarists and irrationalists—whether historians or artists—are also mistaken: We are conditioned rational beings with implicit obligations to civilization as an ideal and partial reality. Among early modern thinkers, Barzun particularly admires Erasmus and Swift in this regard. In "Swift, or Man's Capacity for Reason," he wrote in the somber year 1946: "The axioms of social reason have a long history in Western culture, and Swift met them again and again in his favorite authors . . . Herodotus, Lucian, St. Augustine, Dante, Rabelais, and Montaigne."

Barzun is notable for his geniality, urbanity, and a comprehensive and generous mental receptivity to human variety—including within the sphere of religion; in this he resembles William James, to whose classic *Varieties of Religious Experience*

he wrote a foreword. Yet an orthodox, normative view of the human person as properly disposed to rationality and ethics—what he calls "the ultimate decencies"—is constantly at work in his thought, writing, and action. Occasionally one gets a deeper view of this resolute stance, as in the 1946 Swift essay: "Like Pascal, Swift compels us to go through the burning maze of self-questioning where every duty turns abruptly into a temptation: We must respect ourselves, morality and social life are impossible without it. But, without warning, self-respect engenders vanity and self-righteousness."

Here he sounds like T. S. Eliot's Thomas Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*. In the dark year 1940, Barzun's close friend Lionel Trilling wrote that Eliot's recent writings on Christianity and society at least conceived a more moderate, honorable, and charitable stance toward the world and its catastrophic problems (including a world war) than the ferocious, murderous alternatives of the day: racist and imperialistic Social Darwinist Fascism, and "Scientific Socialist" Communism, about both of whose vast moral horrors the world would know far more by 1945. The rational-moral crisis of modern utilitarianism lay precisely in the fact that both Nazis and Communists could provide plausible "scientific," utilitarian, and majoritarian arguments for their mass purges, liquidations, and wars. A distinguished German historian of Nazism, Detlev Peukert, could even title an essay on the death camps and the ideology of extermination "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science."

Toward the end of *From Dawn to Decadence*, surely Barzun's masterpiece, there is high praise and a brief discussion of a classic literary defense of individuality and moral liberty as against utilitarianism: Dostoevsky's Christian parable of "The Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In Barzun, Dostoevsky finds a kindred spirit: an independent man and a great soul, one who has done much for the cause of civilization.

NR

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■ FILM ■

Original Gangsta

ROSS DOUTHAT

NOBODY can whack the Mafia movie, but Tony Soprano did his best. After six riveting, exhaustive seasons with New Jersey's leading crime family, a memo seems to have gone out to every filmmaker contemplating a gangster flick: No more Italians for a while, *capisce*? So Martin Scorsese, the *paisan's paisan*, shipped up to Boston last year and went with Irish mobsters for *The Departed*, while this fall's gangland forays, *Eastern Promises* and *We Own the Night*, have turned to the Russian mafia for inspiration. And now comes the baldly titled *American Gangster*, which aims to be to mob movies what its 1970s anti-hero, Frank Lucas, was to real-life mobsters: the one that finally earned African-American crime kingpins the respect they deserve.

That Lucas is played by Denzel Washington makes for a pretty good start; that he's directed by Ridley Scott and backed up by Russell Crowe, as the rumbled, incorruptible cop on his trail, is likewise welcome tidings; that Frank Lucas's real-life story is *way* stranger than fiction is the best news of all. Lucas showed up in New York City as a teenager and petty crook from backwoods North Carolina, and lucked his way into a job under the wing of Ellsworth "Bumpy" Johnson, the legendary boss of Harlem. ("A gentleman among gentlemen, a king among kings, a killer among killers, a whole book and Bible by himself," Lucas said of Johnson a few years ago, in the riveting *New York* magazine profile that inspired Steven Zaillian's screenplay.) When Johnson dropped dead two decades later, in 1968, Lucas was his driver, bagman, and bill collector, and that's where the movie kicks off its story—with Bumpy expiring in Lucas's arms, thrusting Harlem's gangland into chaos and opening up a world of opportunities for a young man in a hurry.

Washington's performance makes Lucas out to be a cross between two of his earli-

er roles—Alonzo Harris, the Mephistophelean cop in *Training Day*, and Malcolm X. He's a man pleased with his own wickedness but ascetic at the same time, and quick to couch his crimes in the language of business and black empowerment. From the beginning, he sets out to be bigger than Bumpy: His mentor "had one of the biggest companies in New York City," Lucas declaims, "but he didn't own his own company. White man owned it, so they owned him." His Harlem rivals try to follow in Bumpy's footsteps, clawing over each other to sell the white man's low-quality drugs, but not Frank Lucas. He hops a plane to Indochina and arranges to have his heroin flown direct from the Golden Triangle, smuggled in the last place anyone would think to look: in military transports, and eventually in the coffins of returning KIAs. The result is "Blue Magic," the best and purest heroin

has given him, to set Roberts on his scent. The same flashy outing also earns Lucas the attention of Gotham's corrupter-than-corrupt Special Investigations Unit (two-thirds of whose members were indicted by the late 1970s), led by Josh Brolin's Detective Trupo: the yang to Roberts's upright yin, out for nobody but himself and proud of it. From then on the movie becomes a three-man show, with the good cop, the bad cop, and the mobster each trying to turn the others to his own purposes, or take them down for good.

The whole thing adds up to a smooth, professional entertainment. There are some wasted supporting characters and blind-alley subplots, and the film's emphasis on how Roberts's private life mirrors Lucas's public career (the honest cop is a philanthropist and an absentee father, while the criminal is an upstanding family man) runs toward heavy-handedness, but *American*



Denzel Washington in *American Gangster*

on the streets of New York, which makes Lucas a rich man and brings the Mafia—embodied by Armand Assante's Dominic Cattano, wonderfully self-assured in his sleaziness—to *his* door, asking for a piece of the action.

As Lucas rises, the city collapses around him; drugs are everywhere and half the police force is on the take, and only Crowe's Roberts, the Last Honest Cop, seems interested in halting the gravy train rather than serving himself a helping. (In the movie's early moments, we see him stumbling on a million bucks in unmarked bills and turning it in as evidence, to the astonishment and fury of his colleagues.) But even he has to grope his way to the realization that Frank Lucas, despite the color of his skin, isn't working for anyone but himself; it takes a rare Lucas slip-up, accepting front-row seats at the Ali-Frazier fight and wearing a chinchilla coat his wife

Gangster's only significant weakness is precisely its professionalism. Real-life mafiosos are worlds duller and dumber, by all accounts, than Hollywood makes them out to be, but the actual Frank Lucas seems to have been even *more* fascinating than his big-screen incarnation—a wilder, more self-aggrandizing personality, with more adventures (battling bandits in the Thai jungle; smuggling drugs on the same plane as Henry Kissinger) than would fit into even a 157-minute movie. In contrast, Zaillian's screenplay (and Washington's charismatic but relatively low-key performance) makes Lucas out to be more cautious, professional, and buttoned-down than he really was in life. And the movie follows the same pattern: *American Gangster* engrosses but never surprises, which suggests that it might have been something greater if it hadn't played things quite so safe.

NR

Dress You Up



RICHARD BROOKHISER

SOME holidays cast their spirit over many months. Ebenezer Scrooge told the last ghost that he would honor Christmas in his heart and try to keep it all the year. For 30 years after Appomattox, America kept one long Decoration Day. Our endless holiday is the one we just celebrated, Halloween.

The Halloweens of my childhood are preserved in the Kodaks of memory: tiny people in odd bits of costume, much of it homemade (sheets for ghosts), wandering among the short trees of suburbs with paper bags and UNICEF boxes. That still goes on, with more expensive costumes and among taller trees, but modern Halloween has grown up.

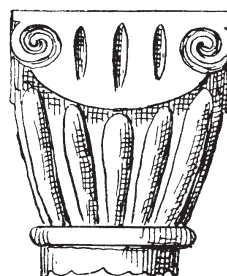
One half of the holiday still comes round only when the leaves fall: the corpses, skeletons, eyeballs, brain goo, and gross-out paraphernalia of slasher films, evoking death and destruction. The year's end in temperate zones makes us think of our own. Mexicans and their Day of the Dead have nothing on us; our seasonal maniacs and their victims are authentically homegrown, descendants of Poe, and of that angry God and the sinners in His hands. But Halloween has another, milder face, which only heightens the way we behave year-round. I refer to the costuming of desire.

There is a chain of cosmetics stores in New York (their website lists 24 stores in Manhattan, with a dozen more in Brooklyn, the suburbs, and Florida). I noticed the first one a few years ago, and

now there are two within a five-minute walk of my apartment. At this rate they will become as common as Duane Reades. They sell makeup and hair-care products, which are also major items in drugstores these days. But they do a flourishing business in accessories and what can only be called props—the little add-ons that can turn a look into a mask.

As Halloween approaches, the stores go to town. Guys are wooed with the Jack Sparrow look—plumed hats, eye-patches, hand-hooks, cutlasses. But most of the outfits are for the ladies, and all of them are revealing. The mannequins in the windows of these stores always show a lot of leg, but at Halloween they offer to show it in dozens of different ways. Same legs, many settings. It's like an old season of *Star Trek* in which, by some coincidence, bare midriffs were fashionable across the galaxy. The common mood of all the costumes is naughty. Naughty nurses, naughty Marie Antoinettes, naughty referees, naughty bumblebees. There are even naughty border-guard uniforms (they come with badge and binoculars); somebody buy one for John McCain. Text explicates the less obvious personae. One jumpsuit declares, REHAB REJECT, then on the seat, INTERVENTION MY A**. A low-cut black outfit intends to make you think of a CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR. "We seem to be dealing with a woman here, Watson." "And why do you think so?" "The décolletage." These are not costumes for retirees, but they are not (thank God) costumes for children either. This is how the urban young adult (and the teenager who aspires to be that person) chooses to dress up.

Skin is no news. The miniskirt came in before I hit puberty, the bikini before I was born. But such outfits revealed you. These outfits seem to be revealing a person who is not quite you. The desire to disguise persists even after the naughty maid has been hung in the closet for the year. The ordinary makeup that these stores sell is electric and declamatory: women's wigs as phony-looking as bad toupees; hair dye the color of a chemical spill. Cosmetics, and other tools of fashion, have always concealed and redistributed the bodies of those who used them.



But the beauty aids themselves were often concealed; a woman wearing false eyelashes or a girdle was creating a better her. A woman wearing an obvious costume is presenting a different her.

Holmes would want to assign a motive. Disguise facilitates desire by speeding up the process. It makes it easier to get down to business, and to go home afterwards. An arresting mask is a quicker come-on than a conversation about your summer vacation or your goals in life, and, once the encounter is over, you can leave (you think) with your dignity intact since it was never exposed in the first place. Oh long-dead hippie-chick days. There was a time when the sexual revolution said it was about nature, and skinny-dipping in the swimming-holes of innocence and experience. Wrong. It's about dressing up to party.

One downside to the aesthetic of disguise is that if you miss out on longeurs and embarrassment, what are you finding exactly? If you wear a maid outfit to a party, haven't you sent your maid to the party in your place? But it is as futile to advise as it is unseemly to rail. People will do what they do, and they often have their reasons. After 30 years of hypersexuality, purveyed by fashion magazines as thick as the Yellow Pages, and an Internet that can whisk Moldovan sex slaves to your iPod, the pressures on the typical biped must be unendurable. To recapture the

experience of a world so recently lost as Mayberry, you would have to flee to the mountains with an ingot and an assault rifle, and that would not be Mayberry at all but insanity. If you are in the middle of the stampede, maybe it is necessary—certainly it must feel better—to dress up.

Might there not be side benefits? Russell Kirk was always accused of wanting to go back to Louis XIV. Well, what about it? Could Manhattan use a few people with four-foot staves, and buckles on their shoes? The bluesman asked his listeners to put a twenty-dollar gold piece on his watch chain, so the boys would know he died standing pat. Why wait? That would mean finding such a thing as a watch chain, to say nothing of a twenty-dollar gold piece. Beats casual Friday. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Sanctimonious Joe?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 12

AWHILE back, watching television, I winced when a Democratic stalwart referred to “sanctimonious Joe.” He was talking about Sen. Joe Lieberman, I quickly discovered. Since then I have begun quietly memorizing the anti-Lieberman glossary. A few days ago I spotted “race-baiting.” “War-mongering” is a term of derogation so widely used, you have to remind yourself to wince when you hear it.

There are those who belong to a mischievous political set that gets a kick out of the whole thing. Here is why, for those who have lost track: Lieberman was so radiantly established as a Democratic luminary that when Al Gore announced that he had selected Lieberman as his running mate in 2000, there wasn’t much surprise. Lieberman’s credentials were in fine order. Hometown boy from Stamford, Conn., brilliant career at Yale, on to law school and, briefly, the practice of law, before he won election to the Connecticut state Senate and began his rise in the Democratic party. In 1988 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, defeating longtime incumbent Lowell Weicker.

There was a great big bump in the road in 2006. Senator Lieberman supported the U.S. enterprise in Iraq, as indeed did most Democrats at the time. But there was a hothead waiting for him in Greenwich, Conn., where those devoted to golf and Wall Street from time to time assert their democratic macho. They did this in the Democratic primary by locating a relative unknown and encouraging him to run for the nomination against Lieberman. At first this was thought a preposterous sally, which, in the end, it proved to be. But before the end came, the contender had prevailed over Lieberman, who, in six years, had traveled from Democratic vice-presidential nominee to disowned Democratic senator.



Well, order was quickly established. Joe Lieberman announced that he would run as an independent, and that doomed the candidacy of the usurper. But the real drama was immediately ahead. When the 2006 returns were finally in, we learned that the Senate had 49 Democrats, 49 Republicans, one Socialist—and Joe Lieberman.

Political housekeepers went quickly to work, and Senate Democrats decided the time had come to be extremely nice to Joe Lieberman. Because as long as he stayed with them to organize the Senate, it was Democratic. He was at liberty—is at liberty—to cross the aisle anytime he feels like it and vote with the Republicans, and perhaps inaugurate his new career by proposing an end to any federal aid to Greenwich, Conn.

He has not done that, but he has provided critical aid to the Republican administration. Of course, there has been the ongoing support for the Iraqi enterprise. Sometimes he would wander even farther afield, as when he provided critical support for Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. More recently, he asked General Petraeus if he wanted congressional authority to pursue Iranian troops across the Iraqi border into Iran. That elicited a blog headed, “How Nucking Futs is Holy Joe Lieberman?” Asked in a television interview whether he intended to change his political allegiance, Senator Lieberman smiled patiently at the questioner and managed to convey that he was in no hurry, but would welcome the Democrats’ rediscovery of the international spirit shown by FDR, JFK, and LBJ. Al Gore has yet to be heard from on this point, but the Nobel Prize he has just been awarded for his pursuit of peace is certain to be interpreted by political ethnologists as the equivalent of rewarding Gore for disavowing his sometime running mate.

All this, of course, will straighten out after the next election. To add to the piquancy of the scene, Connecticut’s other senator, Chris Dodd, is eager to run for president. Dodd first won election to the Senate in 1980, defeating former senator

James L. Buckley. Just possibly, Dodd will find himself rejected for president, and rejected two years later for another term in the Senate. Maybe the Democrats in Greenwich will attempt to draft James Buckley, restoring a sense of historical order.

What about the Faithful?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 16

THERE is head-scratching in the political marketplace over a looming contradiction. The candidates for president of the United States include a man identified as a Roman Catholic, and among the voters there are, of course, many Catholics. It would be reasonable to suppose that Candidate Giuliani would get the presumptive backing of the Catholic population.

But there are a couple of caveats.

First, is Giuliani a Catholic other than nominally? Because his name is Italian, one assumes that he subscribes to the faith associated with the Italian people. As a boy, he went to Catholic schools, and he was apparently devout; he even contemplated entering seminary. But is he a practicing Catholic now?

In 1999 the question of his religious faith was put to him directly. His reply: “I don’t attend [Catholic services] regularly, but I attend occasionally.”

Now, plop!, this raises special problems in the Catholic communion. Catholics are not only expected to attend Mass every week, they are bound to do so. In the matter of the Sabbath, you can be an easygoing Episcopalian, or Quaker, or even Reform Jew, and no rule is broken of formal consequences. But that isn’t so in the Catholic communion, because there are rules that include attendance at Mass on Sundays. If you’re a Philadelphia lawyer you might here smile a bit and say, well . . . Christians don’t always behave as Christians, so what else is new?

Ah, but that doesn’t work. Because the kind of godlessness expressed by a failure to live a life of charity, sustained by faith and hope, is, unhappily, pretty unnoticeable. Everyone excepting the saints is, under such scrutiny, “un-Christian.” But a failure to attend church on Sunday is, by Catholic standards, contumacious, an

ostentatious rejection of a formal obligation. It is the equivalent of an observant Jew biting into a piece of pork. Penitence, if genuine, can minister to any infraction of the faith. But to violate systematically the Commandment that says, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy," is systematically to reject one's faith.

There are other problems, in the matter of Mr. Giuliani. One's sense of things is that the religious communities are understanding in the matter of failed marriages, but those who aspire to lead are quite reasonably examined more closely, and in the matter of Giuliani, there is the second and then the third wife, with ugly consequences involving children and living quarters.

Which is to say that a candidate holding out his affiliation with a religious body as a reason to presume harmonious values with other voters of the same faith has to prepare for a likelihood of resentment among coreligionists if he appears lax in the practice of his faith. Members of a club can be relaxed about the member who does not pay his dues. But there is the risk there of continued neglect gradually understood as disloyalty.

There is the factor that in any political contest others are aspiring to win the voters' approval. It is natural that candidates will call attention to the failures of their rivals, and that interested observers will join in. Gary Bauer, for instance, a long-time champion of the relevance of the Christian faith in politics, cannot be expected to be indifferent to the anomalies we speak of. James Dobson is likely to be heard from. And then—and then, there are the bishops and priests who will not wish to be thought indifferent to the indifference of others to the cosmic commitments they have made.

Let the Armenians Rest

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 19

ONE stares in dumb amazement at the war front because, incredibly, frontpage news in the past few days has had to do with what did or did not happen almost a hundred years ago. More exactly, what should what hap-

pened a hundred years ago be called?

The quarrel, put simply, is over the question, What do we call what was done to the Armenians by the Turks in the early years of World War I? The matter of interest is the persecution of the Armenians by the Young Turks and ancillaries in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, when the map of the Middle East was changing.

The dispute hit the front pages when a congressional resolution affirming that the events of 1915–1917 constituted genocide appeared likely to pass in the House of Representatives. The Turkish government reacted strongly, and President Bush urged Congress not to drive this wedge between the United States and an important ally in the region.

It may be of historical-terminological interest what to call the Young Turks' action. But it is worthwhile to remember that it has been dubbed a "genocide" for many years, even though there has been technical resistance to the use of the holy word. A Polish-born lawyer named Raphael Lemkin coined the term "genocide" in 1943. "I became interested in genocide," he said, "because it happened so many times." His writings before World War II had concentrated heavily on the events in Armenia. More than one international organization has conducted studies of those events, each in turn determining that the term "genocide" accurately describes what has also been called a "massacre."

True, Lemkin did not have dispositive authority on the correct use of the word, and after the Nazi Holocaust became widely known, there were those who insisted that the Turkish holocaust should not be thought a member of the same family. Their point has been that Hitler's war against the Jews was ethnic and cultural, while the Turkish assault on the Armenians had to do with more conventional geopolitical issues.

The questions are not uninteresting, but that they should have a bearing on the Iraq War seems strange until one studies the geography of the region. The interfaces are in the northeastern part of Iraq, the area known as South Kurdistan. There we have an irredentist passion among some Kurdish militants to sever formal ties to the government of Iraq, in favor of a new-old nation unified by cultural and historical factors. And, not incidentally, by physical control of rich oil deposits.

The Turks do not wish a new state

bulging up between them and Iraq—especially because their own Kurds would surely be emboldened if the Iraqi Kurds were successful. The situation could get "ugly," one U.S. military officer is quoted as saying, if Turkey were to send troops across the border to deal with Kurdish militants inside Iraq. It was into this tense situation that the House resolution erupted.

We are asked to believe that the Turkish high command judges it more important to resist such classification affirmed by an ally than to pursue the common aims in the region. On the moral point, there is no way in which Turkey can advance its credentials by trivializing what in fact was done to the Armenians, more than 1 million of them having been killed, allowed to starve, or exiled. But this ought not to be a quarrel that affects contemporary points of contention in Iraq. Those who linger with the muse of Clio are giving no aid whatever to the dead Armenians, but are jeopardizing our Iraq enterprise by provoking Turkish hubris.

The implications of this breach are horrendous. Turkey is a NATO power, and if it were to act singularly it would damage a military-political venture in which the United States—the father and mainstay of NATO—is engaged at high pitch.

It is almost always relevant to ask the classical question, *Cui bono?* Who stands to gain?

No postmortem aid to the dead Armenians is in prospect. On the other hand, the Turks can't permanently commandeer the historical classification of actions by one state against a cultural or ethnic minority. So is it a matter of pride?

We are constantly being told about the high-octane pride of Turks, Kurds, Iraqis, whomever. Is the congressional resolution simply an exercise in American pride?

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



"He's a really nice guy, but his Ann Coulter action figure creeps me out."

happy warrior

MARK STEYN

The West's Metal, And Mettle

THE other week, in Wednesbury in the English Midlands, an unusual crime occurred. A thief passed down a residential street and methodically stole every single front-door handle and house number. The victims discovered the burglary when they tried to leave their homes and found the door no longer opened. An Englishman's home may be his castle but if you can't let down the drawbridge it's indistinguishable from a dungeon.

Trying to get a, er, handle on property crime in the United Kingdom is a problematic business. Why would anyone steal door knockers? Well, there's a construction boom in India and China. Demand for lead is higher than at any time since 1980 and the price of copper has quadrupled in two years. And in a globalized marketplace, that hasn't escaped the attention of Britain's criminal gangs, for whom "scrap metal" has become a far more lucrative proposition than it might once have been.

According to the *Times* of London, this summer 19 schools had their roofs stolen. What's the point of locking your valuables when the lock itself—and the handle and the hinges—is suddenly valuable? Eighty manhole covers were recently stolen from the streets of Gloucester. And don't bother warning the criminals that if they carry on like this they'll wind up in court, because they've already been there: The magistrates' court in West Bromwich now leaks because metal thieves stole the lead from the courthouse roof.

An element of organization is required to steal, say, a schoolhouse roof. But not the brass street number on a front door. So naturally junkies and other ne'er-dowells in need of a few quid are happy to half-inch (Cockney rhyming slang for "pinch") any brass doorbell they happen to pass by, and shop it to illegal metal dealers. Social decay is not without its

moments of innovation, if only in its pioneering of crimes one had hitherto never imagined. You could get a guard dog, but he'll only attract the attention of the dog thieves who've created an epidemic of canine crime in Britain. The lethargic constabulary are forming the usual task forces and whatnot to examine the problem of metal crime, and perhaps some enterprising fellow even now is developing retinal-scan technology that will render the handsome brass door knocker obsolete.

But that won't solve the problem so much as divert it down other creative avenues. Americans who've taken a job for a year or two in Britain often express to me—after the usual appreciation for the castles and the Royal Shakespeare Company—their amazement at the relentlessness of the criminal assault. You rent a home in a leafy upscale suburb, have a pleasant supper on the patio your first evening, and wake up the following morning to find your garden furniture's missing. The coppers are unsympathetic: They'll sigh at your naivety for leaving your lawn furniture on the lawn.

Likewise, if your car radio's stolen, it's your fault for leaving it in the car: You should remove it and take it with you, and then put it back in the vehicle when you want to listen to it, like folks did way back when they propped the prototype transistor radios on the dashboard. As for all the cellphone theft, well, it wouldn't happen if people were sensible and just kept their mobile telephones at home—say, on a table in the hall or kitchen or some other central location where it could be answered without having to move it around all the time.

But "crime prevention" measures cannot in and of themselves prevent crime. When I lived in England, not so long ago, one of the minor pleasures of rural life was walking across a couple of fields, along a public footpath through a copse,

discovering a small medieval country church, and going inside to contemplate the divine for a few minutes. In those days, the churches were unlocked. They're not anymore. Presumably there were local lads who would steal from the Lord even then, but not a significant segment of the population who targeted houses of worship. So today there's wire mesh over the beautiful (one assumes) stained glass to stop thieves pinching the lead from the windows. It's a small loss, but a telling one. The police have no leads, and the buildings have no lead. Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it was stolen last Thursday.

Back in the Seventies, it was discovered that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were illegally burning the barns of Quebec separatists. And Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau remarked with his customary glibness that if people were upset by the illegal barn-burning perhaps he'd make it legal for the Mounties to burn barns. As George Jonas observed, M. Trudeau had missed the point: Barn-burning wasn't wrong because it was illegal; it was illegal because it was wrong. Once that distinction is lost, civil society becomes all but

impossible—because a broadly agreed morality plays a big role in social cohesion. Today in the Western world, more and more things are illegal but we're less and less clear what's *wrong*. And everywhere but America, where any metal thief who attempts to steal a doorknob risks staggering away with at least as much metal lodged in his vital organs as in his swag bag, the state doesn't trust its citizens to defend their property and in doing so uphold what's right.

Britain's metal crime is a telling image of social disintegration: The very infrastructure of society—the manhole covers, the pipes, the cables on the transportation system, the fittings of the courthouse—is being cannibalized and melted down. When there's no longer a sufficiently strong moral consensus and when the state actively disapproves of a self-reliant citizenry, what's left is the law. And law detached from any other social pillars is not enough, and never can be.

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The police have no leads, and the buildings have no lead.

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The Peculiar Incentives of Teacher Pensions

Pensions have long been an important part of compensation for teachers in public schools. However, the incentive structures of teacher pension systems are not widely understood, even though they can have powerful effects on the composition of our teaching force and on public finance. In our research, we have found that teachers typically earn relatively little in the way of pension benefits until they reach their early fifties, when much larger benefits start to accrue. Beyond that point, the pension system begins to push teachers out the door, even if they are still effective teachers. As teacher retirement benefit costs begin to spiral upward, we need to ask what effect these systems have on recruitment and retention.

—Robert M. Costrell and Michael Podgursky

American Teachers: What Do They Believe?

There are nearly three and a half million public and private elementary and secondary teachers in the United States, more individuals by far than in any other occupation. During the course of the 2005–6 school year, each teacher spent upward of 1,260 hours working with our nation's 54 million elementary and secondary school students. It would seem useful to know something about the values they hold. Where do America's elementary and secondary school teachers stand on freedom of speech, family values, and economic inequality, for example? What do they believe about religion and human nature?

—Robert O. Slater

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